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ON THE COVER:

Gautier Paulin
throws out a
huge lazy whip

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The SuperEnduro
elite fire into action
at Liverpool

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COMMENT

It's definitely been an interesting time for debate of late with our very own columnist Jake Nicholls opening up a right can of worms on the subject of the Maxxis British championships. While I agree with some of Jake's points and disagree with others (even though I totally get where he's coming from) in my mind it's not the British championship that needs a rethink but British motocross as a whole – or it does if we think the British championship has to be a valuable stepping stone for riders on the road to world championship glory. And that opens up a whole different debate in itself...

Back in the day there used to be a very structured path to GP glory that you could follow from the very grassroots of the sport to the highest echelons. That clear path has long since grown over and in my mind the one thing that's to blame is commercial gain – the clubs and organisations that used to be the heart and soul of the sport have disappeared and been replaced by professional promoters. Now that's not necessarily a bad thing in itself but when the clubs started to disappear so did the structure and that's why the British championship is struggling now because there is no bridge from club events to the premier championship.

If you look 20 years back there was much less choice for the adult racer and the two options when you turned 17 were AMCA or ACU. The AMCA is pretty much the same now as it was then and their path to the championship is clearly defined – you start in the Juniors and if you're quick enough you'll then progress through the ranks to the Seniors first and then the Experts where if you're a local front runner you'll be eligible to race in the Area Qualifiers. Finish in the top few of those and you'll then be entered into the National championship where if you finish in the top five will more than

likely get picked to represent Great Britain in the European IMBA championship. Lovely.

In the 1990s the ACU system was similar. Riders started out in the Junior ranks and tried to collect Expert grading points at Centre meetings. Once you had the required amount you'd move up to the Experts at which point you could race the Qualifying championship to try and get into the British championship. There'd be 60 riders in the 125 class and 60 in the Open who'd all have to qualify for the 40 starting spots available at a British championship round. Once in the British you might finish high enough to earn a spot on the GP grading list for your chosen class but you had to really work for that!

There were no short cuts in this old system either – even for foreign or schoolboy stars. I vividly remember Carl Nunn having to race a Qualifying championship round at Hawkstone Park in 1994 so he'd be eligible to race the Brit champs in '95 and when Rob Herring came over from South Africa he had to earn his Expert points before even trying to qualify for the next year's championship.

Since then the ACU structure has faltered somewhat and although there are still some

strong centres the majority have all withered away and dies along with the Qualifying series and the Under 21s championship n'all. So with no clear path laid out how does a speedy centre rider build their way up to a place in the British championship?

Well, unless they're picked up by a team it's kind of difficult to make it there and it's all a bit hit and miss. If you find a centre that still has Junior and Expert classes and runs meetings where grading points are up for grabs then you can earn an ACU Expert licence and IF entries are low you may scrape an entry for an odd round of the Maxxis but other than that it seems like either your face fits or it doesn't and there's no fair way of earning a full-time spot in the series and there's not even qualifying to find the fastest 40 on the day.

As well as the path to get there disappearing, the extra preparation each step gave riders is gone n'all. If you imagine that centre races would be 15 minutes plus a lap and qualifying championship races 20 minutes plus two laps it was all building riders up to be ready for the 30 minutes plus two lap British championship motos which were just five minutes shorter than the GP races of that time.

Basically, each step went some way to preparing you for the next.

One of Jake Nicholls arguments is that 20 minute sprints are next to useless preparation for 30 minute plus two lap GP motos where the competition is somewhat stiffer and more intense anyway. Series promoter Brian Higgins counters that 20 minute motos are enough of a challenge for most of the Maxxis entrants and the series should cater for the needs of the majority rather than the four grand prix riders who are registered for the 2014 championship.

I don't disagree with Brian on that but at the same time hold the ACU

– that's the organisation that Brian's the Chairman of – responsible for doing away with series like the qualifying championship which readied riders for longer championship motos. He'd no doubt claim that there wouldn't be enough entries to make running such a series worthwhile (and to be fair that's why the Under 21s and MMX/Four-stroke championships went missing from the calendar in the first place) even though a series like the GT Cup can fill adult line ups several times over.

So maybe less prestigious ACU sanctioned championships like the GT Cup or the all-new MX Nationals series could become the missing link between fast clubman riders and the pro ranks and if the top riders from those series are invited to join the current 'top 40' in a morning timed qualifying session we could go some way to restoring the British championship to its former glory – y'know when each and every rider had earned his place on the start line and there was a full line up. Let us know your thoughts on the matter by email or Facebook or Twitter.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year y'all...



Things were so much simpler in the early nineties

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MACNEWS UND

A BRIEF LOOK AT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE OFF-ROAD WORLD...

Guess who's back, back again... Christophe Pourcel, that's who, and this time bigger than the Beatles. After going AWOL at the end of the 2012 MX1 GP season he's been seemingly hiding under a rock in Florida just living the dream. But the guy is back (for now but anything can happen) and has inked a deal with Valli Yamaha to race the 250 outdoor championship Stateside. He's come a ball-hair away from winning the 250 outdoor championship twice in '09 and '10 but was robbed in the dying stages courtesy of a blown motor the first time and a heavy fall the second. Love him or hate him, CP377 is a bad man on a bike and it will be an interesting season so long as he gets out of bed on the right side every Saturday morning.

The Mini O's in Florida kicked off on the 25th of November for their 42nd edition of the 'Winter Olympics' event and this year three British wonder kids took the challenge to conquer one of the biggest Youth motocross events on the planet. Dylan Woodcock, Jordan Eccles and Gradie Featherstone were all in attendance riding in their respected classes and although deadline day comes before the event has signed off, each have been hovering inside the top 10 for the majority of their encounters so far and are shaping up to continue on that way for the rest of the week.

If Chad Reed's performances this year were a little under par from what we all expected from him, at least he is still the king of PR. Reed knows how to work it with his social media and has a massive following because of it (and his riding of course). He had the industry

hanging off of him while he was trying to decide what bike to ride with his team, or while he was negotiating title sponsorship deals by uploading precariously taken pictures and subtle hints and clues which had everyone speculating.

Eventually though he announced that the team would be fronted by Discount Tire and he would ride Kawasaki KX450Fs which is surprising because he had his worst season of late aboard a Kawi but he puts that down to not liking certain aspects of the team and personnel he was involved with. Now with Kawasakis being built the way he wants them it could be a winner-winner chicken dinner.

A little less high profile but equally as important all the same, Shaun Simpson has found a home for next year – hooray! It was a nervous time for the final GP of '13 winner as we were getting pretty deep into the off-season and he had mentioned before that there weren't a flurry of spectacular offers after his insane performance at Lierop. But in a turn of fortune he was able to announce at the Dirt Bike Show that he has returned to Roger Magee's KTM UK team. Shaun has the option of 350 or 450 I believe and will be testing both to see which he fancies. He will also be joined by Mel Pocock on the team who will be competing World and British MX2 as a replacement for EBB.

Then there was the Ferris fiasco. I don't want to say too much because I don't want to get shot down like the proverbial clay pigeon, but in brief, Ferris signed for Dixon's Cosworth Yamaha squad on a 450 (because of his age) and has always proclaimed that he prefers an MX1 bike and that's where

his future lies. Then, however, Dixon mentioned in his statement on the whole affair that since Ferris had an outstanding performance at the MXoN on his 250 he might have started to reconsider his future on the bigger bike and began to look towards the American scene where he is still eligible to ride a 250F. Dixon also pretty much said that through his experience once a rider starts to pine for something else in their career – wanting to be in America but tied into Europe for example – then it's going to be a long season for everyone involved. Ferris is now rumoured to be in talks with KTM in America.

A potentially long winded debate was on the brink of eruption regarding next years Maxxis British Championship format through November as Jake Nicholls stepped up and openly bashed the ACU for their current format of three x 20 minute (+2 laps) races. He, as a GP rider, feels it is of no benefit to him towards competing in the world championship where the races are now 30 + 2.

What he essentially did though was open a door and provide a platform for anyone else who has grievances with the current format and there were quite a number of people to step up behind him and back him up. The ACU have been bulking this winter too though, bro, and quickly shut the door by saying the format will remain the same for next year at least but I wouldn't be surprised if it was to be altered for 2015 (I'm predicting six 10 minute +2 laps because according to Brian Higgins race fans like starts – Suttly).

Husqvarna's relaunch into the UK under new management went

particularly well. At the annual Skeggy beach race, Husky-banana's MX1 weapon, Nathan Watson, won the three hour sand race by a big margin from Malc Moffat's son, Matthew. It was a good way for Husky, Nate 'dawg' and the newly named Dantec Husqvarna UK team (formerly Evo-Tech Stevens KTM) to start their partnership and most likely notice of their intent for next season.

Worth a watch online, if you haven't already seen it, is the final round of the AMA Endurocross series in Las Vegas. In a winner takes all scenario (they were tied on points), 'Downtown' Mike Brown and Taddy Blazusiak just had to beat one another and whoever did so won the championship. Blazusiak grabbed the holeshot but got speared by Brownie who wasn't taking no shit and it all kicked off from there. They swap positions a handful of times and are on the deck as much too – I won't tell you the rest so you can see it for yourself but it's worth a look.

And finally, it was sad and shocking news to wake up and hear of the death of Kurt Caselli one morning from the Baja 1000. The guy was definitely a member of the #BAclub and certainly one of the greatest of all time in his profession as an off-road racer. Initial reports suggested that some locals had caused the accident by digging a hole or something to promote a crash for their entertainment but in a press release later from KTM, once mechanics were on the scene they found traces of animal hair on the front end of the bike leaving them to presume he most likely collided with an animal and that there was no foul play. Regardless, it was a sad time for the two-wheeled world. R.I.P Kurt Caselli.





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In the instance of magazines that are about riding dirt bikes what does DBR stand for?

- Is it:** **A:** Definitely Brilliant Reading
B: Da Bear Rocks
C: Daft Blinkin' Raccoons
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Nev Bradshaw is ready for the 2014 Arenacross series – are you?



COUNTDOWN!

ARENACROSS SERIES COMING RIGHT UP...

Now just weeks away from firing into life, the 2014 Arenacross championship is shaping up to be an absolute epic with a fully international line-up that's set to rock yer socks over seven scorching rounds! Kicking off in Belfast on January 17/18 the series travels to Birmingham, Liverpool, Newcastle and Sheffield before reaching a shuddering climax in London's Wembley Arena on March 1. With a heady mix of pro and youth race action punctuated by high flying demos from the global FMX elite, each and every round is gonna be something special to remember so make sure you're there!

Heading the pro line-up is reigning champion Adam Chatfield who recently also wrapped up the Brazilian MX1 title. With a few solid seasons of AMA supercross under his belt – as well as plenty of wins indoors right here in the UK – Adam has to start as one of the favourites to take the #1 plate once

more but he shouldn't have it too easy. Another home-grown hero with AMA experience is Steven Clarke and although he missed the entire 2013 tour with a shoulder injury should be in the title hunt this time around.

A third Brit with solid SX experience – of a European nature – is Jack Brunell who joins Oakleaf Kawasaki for this year's tour. Brunell finished third in last season's championship after having a final round meltdown while in the hunt for the championship win. Jack knows what it takes to win and after disappointment in 2013 will be hoping to pull it all together and be a more consistent challenger.

UK based South African Neville Bradshaw has years of experience ripping up British indoor circuits and snatched second in last year's championship after putting in a very solid run at the title. Mounted on a 250F Nev sometimes struggles to launch from the line and is well known for his strong

rides through the pack.

British champions Kristian Whatley and Elliott Banks-Browne wade into the battle for 2014. Although lightning quick outdoors their indoor prowess is a little bit of an unknown although only a fool would count them out as contenders if they arrive in Belfast motivated to win. Another couple of indoor unknowns are Brad Anderson and Bryan McKenzie – both have the talent to shine but will they?

Now you've all heard of a guy called Ryan Villopoto but what about his kid brother Tyler? Well, whether you've heard of him or not Tyler's in for Arenacross and will be lining up for Oakleaf Kawasaki. The 23-year-old hasn't quite had the same success as his older brother but he's still a serious contender. As well as perennially terrorising the Canuck's on home soil in the Canadian Motocross Nationals Tyler scored a solid second in Bercy's 250F class back on opening night in 2012

before crashing out on day two. There's no denying Tyler's got skills but how he'll get on with the tight and sticky UK indoor circuits is yet to be seen.

Of course, if you wanna find out first hand you're gonna have to get yourself some tickets (why not treat a loved one n'all?) by logging on to www.arenacrossuk.com. Seats start at £10 for kids and £19 for adults while a Family Ticket (that's two kids n' two grown ups) is available from £49.99 – that's a bargain if ever there was one.

There's one thing more bargainous than cheap tickets though and that's FREE tickets! And FREE tickets is something we've got for you! Basically the good guys at e22 Sports have given us a pair of VIP Tickets and one Family Ticket to give away for each and every round. All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning it is head on over to www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the links to our crazy ticket giveaway – you'd be a fool not to enter!



STOP PRESS!

LPE KAWASAKI BOUNCE BACK WITH FRENCH SIGNINGS...

Just as DBR was about to hit the printers Steve James announced he has signed Gregory Aranda and Fabien Izoid to his LPE Kawasaki Racing team for the 2014 Arenacross tour. Both are highly-skilled indoor riders who have each won the European SX championship 25-year-old Izoid and 24-year-old Aranda are sure to bring some Gallic flair to the UK

Arenacross series.

"Fabien is a very good rider and I was very impressed with how he rode at Bercy," says Steve. "Greg is a very exciting rider with a blistering turn of speed. They are the two riders I wanted to put together from the start as I think they make a very strong team. With these two guys on board we have a really good chance at challenging for the Arenacross title."



WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!

A JAKE NICHOLLS RIDE DAY WITH SHOT CLOTHING...

Although he'll probably try and tell you otherwise, Jake Nicholls had a pretty good year in 2013 with the highlight being that maiden visit to the MX2 world championship podium as he finished a stunning second overall at Matterley Basin. It's also been an amazing year for Jake's clothing sponsor – Shot racewear – that has seen record sales through the brand's #1 online retailer www.freestylextreme.com.

To celebrate the all-round awesomeness of Jake (but not the Neverland Pirates), Freestyle Xtreme and the Shot brand itself British importers Feridax have hooked DBR up with a killer comp that's gonna blow you're mind. Basically the deal is this – answer our question correctly and you'll be entered to a draw to win a riding day with Jake Nicholls at his very own private track. And he'll even give you a signed jersey as a memento! Because we're generous sorts we'll

even chuck in a signed Shot jersey for one runner-up n'all. How does that sound?

If you want in on this action then fire up the PC, point your web browser in the direction of dirtbikerider.com and then follow the links to our competitions page. Once you're there fill in the forms, answer the question and then hit transmit all before the closing date of **January 16**. After that we'll randomly pick one winner and also a runner up.

Just so you're up to speed, the question we'll need to know the answer to is this. What is Jake Nicholls' chosen career race number?

Is it: A: 44
B: 711
C: 45
D: 66

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WHAT SAY YOU?

WITH OAKLEAF KAWASAKI'S
SHAUN ANTHONY...

This month we're taking the managerial option and hooking up with Oakleaf Kawasaki's man at the top Shaun Anthony. After a pretty stellar 2013 the Somerset based outfit will now be gunning for glory as the official Kawasaki MX1 team here in the UK.

DBR: Let's start first if we may with the Dirt Bike Show. Visitor numbers were said to up on last year and you were also there as an exhibitor. From your point of view was there a positive vibe around the show and do you think the show has a long-term future?

SA: "Yeah the Dirt Bike Show was great for the team as well as Kawasaki. The main Kawasaki stand was dressed by our race truck and race bikes all for the 2014 bike launch so a lot of work went in prior to the doors opening to the general public. For the duration of the show there seemed to be a good constant flow of visitors viewing the 2014 range and I'm sure if you asked the response would be the same from all the other manufacturers, exhibitors and trade stands. I'd say that stands the show in a good position for the future."

"For me personally the Dirt Bike Show is a great place to meet sponsors and promote our product to potential new ones too. Without the Dirt Bike Show a lot of deals wouldn't be sorted out as it's possibly the only place you meet the people behind some great products."

DBR: Teams have been announcing new rider line-ups resulting in one of the strongest domestic championships in Europe for 2014. Does this represent the respect and importance both the Maxxis and Red Bull Pro National championships carry?

SA: "I think it's healthy for riders and teams to move on and learn different methods from different riders and teams likewise. For us we have always had a minimum of two seasons with our riders. Fans want to see fresh blood so bringing new riders in always enhances our racing over here in the UK and shows how great our series is as riders from outside of the UK want to come here to ride."

"The Red Bull Pro Nationals do a great job enticing supporters in to make good atmospheres at our tracks but personally I think the Maxxis British championship is the series to win but it needs a bit of life kicking back into it. We as teams work so hard in preparation and finding support only sometimes to be let down by the actual racing atmosphere. They are not getting the supporters through the gate to make it actually feel like a British Championship. I think the organisers should be taking more of a risk in enhancing the events to make it feel that extra bit special rather than playing the waiting game of hoping things will change one day and coming up with the same excuses. Invest to progress I say – it's our sport and too much financial talk takes over the impact the motocross actually has."

DBR: On the subject of the Maxxis an announcement was made that the series will drop the mixed race format for 2014 but will stay with the three 20 minute motos. As a team manager do you think this is a good balance for the series?

SA: "I'm glad they have dropped the mixed race, it didn't do much for me to be honest the only thing it did show was who spends the most money. Personally I would like to see two longer motos for each group and a youth series to follow along side it. If we want riders to progress then we should be matching the same strategies as the FIM. I mean you don't play 70 minutes of football in Division One – all leagues play 90 Minutes!"

IRN-BRY

THE ONE PER CENTER

AS WELL AS BEING SUPER SPEEDY IN THE SACK BRY FINDS HE'S ACTUALLY QUITE QUICK AT RUNNING AS WELL...

Words by **Bryan MacKenzie** Photo by **Harald MacDuff**

The only sport I've ever really been into is riding dirt bikes. Since I first started riding when I was five or six all I ever wanted to do was race. While I was at school I had to do the mandatory P.E. lessons and play that crap non-touch rugby, or even football but none of it really interested me.

Of course there was also athletics and I eventually ran for the school in 800m track twice at the county games in Edinburgh but that wasn't really a choice, more of a nomination because I was good at it. Other than that I don't think I've ever entered a competition of any sorts that hasn't involved a motocross bike.

November/December is a time best spent grinding out next year's results by slaughtering the legs, abs and upper body in the gym and lungs and cardio by pounding the road in your trainers or on the skinny wheeler. But it's at this time that next year could potentially be 'made' or even lost.

But as a dirt biker who trains at 100 per cent – my trainer, Elv, makes sure of that – and assuming everyone else who is at the top of their game in the UK is too, dedicating months each winter to knocking your hole in making sure we're strong, fit (I'll go as far as saying) 'athletes' and then grinding it out week in and week out on the bike and maintaining fitness and strength during the season all amounts to about 11 months of physical exertion per season. Not forgetting our mental strength to be able to dig deep, deal with pain, dedication and our competitive mentality etc. Surely we should be pretty well rounded athletes able to walk into other sports and be fairly competitive right off the bat? For example –

Road biking – It's not for me but MX racers make great Superbike riders. A lot of the top guys on the tarmac originated from riding with knobbly tyres.

Speedway – More and more MX guys are going skidding and are pretty bloody good at it too.

Downhill MTB – I know a few guys who have left MX to get into Downhill and have made pretty respectable names for themselves at some point.

Go karting – Every racer loves a go kart night and we always put in pretty good lap times at any track.

Drinking – Over the Dirt Bike Show weekend I saw Lewis Tombs make the best recovery motocross has seen since Ricky Johnson went down in turn one in the '87 Super Bowl Of Motocross at the L.A. Coliseum and came back to pass Guy Cooper on the last lap for the win! He was down and out on Thursday night before rebounding for Friday morning and looking fresher than the Prince of Bel Air.

The reason I mention this is because Jamie Law made the mistake of introducing me to a run and cycle app during the season called STRAVA. Basically it works by GPS tracking you when you're out running or cycling and times your run for you. People make 'segments' on certain sections of road, trail or whatever and as you're out there and the app is tracking you it

automatically logs your specific time that it took you from start to finish during each 'segment'. Basically, by the time you've completed your entire run/cycle you may have passed through 10 individual segments and it then ranks your time up against everyone else that has also passed through each one giving you a ranking. It's super competitive and highly addictive.

I follow Nev Bradshaw on it too and that guy is just a cycling machine! He does like four hour rides a few times a week and that takes a serious amount of conditioning which goes to show that he could probably make a pretty competitive cyclist if he wanted to. But it's opened my eyes a little to the fact that although I'm a sh*t cyclist by being built like the gable end of a fiver. However, locally it turns out that I'm a pretty decent runner, topping the rankings in a few segments or at least always finishing pretty high up the order.

Like I said, I've never looked any further than motocross for my competition fix but seen on STRAVA this month there was a running challenge – see how fast you can run 10k (it takes into consideration elevation changes too and calculates your time accordingly so you couldn't just bomb down a hill for 10k and be the champion racer of the world).

The challenge lasted for a week and you could have as many tries in that week as you wanted and your fastest time stood. I've never ran in distance before in my life, always just for time, so even that to begin with was new for me but the beauty of it was that there was no big start, no race strategies or anything like that. I was just on my own being tracked by the app and had to just run 10 kilometres as fast as I could.

I logged my first time on day one and have never run so hard for so long in my life. With an average heart rate of 180bpm, I shocked myself when I slotted into 11th – 'kin hell! Over the week I slowly dropped down the order as more guys popped in times and joined the challenge and by Saturday night I was down in 172nd – which initially I would have been pumped with but being almost in the top 10 initially it was now pretty sh*t! So first thing Sunday morning – the final day – I laced up the Pearl Izumi's and went down the canal where it's relatively flat and logged another bitching time which was faster. That dragged me back up to 92nd.

Over the course of the day I dropped back down the order a bit but at the end of play I was 136th out of 17,492 runners (world wide) which is in the top one per cent. I was actually pretty surprised. I know it's not a big deal and it was only a 'challenge' and not a race but it's not something I trained for, have never trained to be a runner or even changed my diet or anything in my life to suit. That was just me, as a motocross rider who is training to race his bike and where that overall conditioning was able to get me in someone else's sport – I don't think many athletes from other sports could walk into our game and fit in quite the same...

Handwritten signature and "#121"



SHOW N' TELL!

WHAT REALLY WENT DOWN AT THE INTERNATIONAL DIRT BIKE SHOW...

The International Dirt Bike Show proved once more to be popular with over 21,000 off-road fans making it to Stoneleigh Park over the duration of the four day show. With its tried n' tested mix of new bikes, new kit, celebrities and bargains galore – and a few new attractions chucked in for good measure – it made for a pretty

interesting day out.

Summing things up quite nicely show organiser Nick Mowbray said – “We’d like to thank all visitors and exhibitors for making the event such a success. We knew it was going to be something of a learning curve in our first year and, boy, have we learnt. We are listening to feedback and will take

on board all comments. One area we know needs attention is the ticket sales area. We appreciate many had to queue for perhaps longer than would ordinarily be acceptable. We will get this sorted and are grateful to all who waited so patiently. Work now starts on the 2014 show and we look forward to seeing everyone back on October 30.”



SHOW STOPPER!

NEW ARAI MX LID TURNS HEADS

Arai's UK distributor Apico pulled out all the stops at the IDBS to give folk something special to feast their eyes on. The stand-out product for us was this all-new Arai MX-V helmet that supersedes the much loved VX-3. The MX-V made its global debut at Stoneleigh – to both the media and public – and since it will only be available to dirt bike dealers early next year was quite the curiosity!

Being an Arai it of course surpasses all safety standards and follows Arai's solid stance on shell shape – steering clear of exaggerated edges and protrusions. Yes, the MX-V is more shapely than older offerings – it's better vented and has a lower centre of gravity n'all – but the basic idea that a helmet should be round, smooth and strong is strictly adhered to. The overall look is still dividing opinion at DBR Towers – the mouthpiece is a little bulky for some people's tastes – but generally speaking the MX-V is a positive move for Arai. To learn more visit www.araihelmet-europe.com...



PROPPA GOOD BLOKE!

RIP KURT CASELLI – ONE OF THE BEST OF THE BEST

Words by Jonty Edmunds

He wasn't a multiple world champion. He wasn't a West Coast bad ass, tattooed from head to toe. He wasn't full of his own self important, nor think of himself as a 'big deal'. Kurt Caselli was a genuinely good bloke – the quintessential nice guy, both on and off the track.

But nice, as one of my old school teachers told me, is a word that should never be used. 'It's a cop out,' he'd say, 'a word that gives no real description or understanding'.

But Kurt was a nice guy, a genuinely nice guy. And it didn't matter if you'd known him for years, like I was lucky enough to have done, or were meeting him for the very first time. You couldn't help but warm to his enthusiasm and jovial character.

Kurt understood his role as a

professional motorcycle racer better than just about any other I know. He understood what was expected of him in terms of results but was able to put things into context. He knew injuries happened, championships were won and lost, and that staying true to your own beliefs and goals was more important than anything.

I don't remember the first time I met Kurt but I'm guessing it was in the States, a GNCC or Endurocross event most likely. But I'll never forget the last time I saw him – at this year's ISDE in Sardinia. With the opening ceremony in full swing, there he was – teeth whiter-than-white, flat peaked Red Bull hat pulled low across his forehead, surrounded by the cream of US off-road racers.

Kurt was always full of life. His default setting was to be content,

smiling, and always joking. With him in Sardinia was his Fiancé Sarah, to whom he'd recently proposed. To say he was as happy as a pig in sh't is a major understatement. We chatted, laughed, and chatted some more later on during the week.

Nearing the end of the six days Kurt wasn't quite as chirpy as we was at the start. He didn't say as much but it was clear he felt like he'd let his boys down – not delivered the result he should for Team USA.

But if it weren't for the efforts of Kurt, and his father Rich, then arguably the likes of Mike Brown, Taylor Roberts, Zach Osborne, and company wouldn't have been at the ISDE. Kurt made it his mission to get the US Trophy team not only back in the game but as competitive and serious about the event as was possible. A mission he succeeded at.

It is in part because of Kurt that the ISDE is what it is today – with the US giving their full support to the event that only a few years back they didn't really give a toss about.

Despite his frustration at not being as fast as in previous years I remember thinking that Kurt had more than done his bit for the US Trophy team. He'd been team leader for so long that it seemed only right that as he focused more on desert and rally racing other members of the squad should start to deliver the better results.

Kurt knew why he wasn't as fast as he wanted to be. Special test racing simply wasn't his thing any more, no matter how much he loved the ISDE. His career was turning in an exciting new direction, one that sadly saw him leave us way too soon.

RIP Kurt.

DESERT STORM!

DUBAI BASED BRIT BAGS FIRST MAJOR RALLY WIN

The Rally scene has become a lot more relevant to the British public of late with HRC Honda rider Sam Sunderland giving us plenty to cheer about. Winning the Merzouga Rally in Morocco, Dubai based Sunderland scored the first major rally win of his career.

Signed with Team HRC Rally to contest the 2014 Dakar, Sunderland led home a field of world-class talent

to secure the Merzouga Rally win. Taking control of the race lead on stage three, the Brit then went on to top two more stages to beat his experienced team-mate Helder Rodrigues for the win.

"It was a great race and a great result for me and Honda," told Sunderland. "To finish like this is the best preparation I could have hoped for the Dakar Rally. It's given me

a huge boost in confidence. I've just got to keep working hard and moving in the right direction."

A rider that has been growing in confidence over the last 12 months, his victory in Morocco will no doubt put him on a high as he prepares for the greatest test of the all – the Dakar Rally. Missing the race in 2013 due to injury, Sunderland is certainly a rider to watch for next January.





SAGAR WINS BEC

TOM TAKES BRITISH ENDURO TITLE #3

Welshman Tom Sagar has ended his year as the 2013 British Enduro Champion. Entering the final round of the season at the Diss MCC Muntjac Enduro as the championship leader, the KTM rider eventually placed third to clinch the title.

With the sandy Thetford Forest providing the setting for the series showdown between Sagar and Jamie McCanney (Husqvarna) all eyes were on the duo to see who would emerge as champion. With six special tests and six laps of the course to contest, it would prove a tense day for all.

Knowing that securing victory was his only chance of taking the title, McCanney set about doing exactly that.

Hot out of the traps, the Husqvarna rider topped the first four special tests to open up a comfortable lead. Seventh fastest on the opening special test, Sagar faced an uphill battle if he wished to win the title.

With McCanney leading, Tom needed to finish fifth or better. The KTM rider began to work his way back up the leader board, clawing time back on the second test. He then found his way up to third as they passed the halfway point in the day. With the pressure off, Sagar held onto third position behind Jamie and Danny McCanney to record his third BEC win.

"It feels incredible to have won this year's British Enduro Championship,"

confirmed Sagar. "Coming into the race I knew what I needed to do to win the title but for some reason my opening test was terrible. I hit all the lines I wanted to but my time just wasn't competitive enough. Ending lap one in seventh left me with a lot work to do.

"I pushed hard on the second test and clawed some time back. On the third test I was 100 per cent committed and worked my way up to third. I knew then I could win the title so I just tried to hold my position for the remainder of the race. Winning the BEC – for the third time – means a lot. I can't thank KTM UK and Colwyn Bay Motorcycles enough for their support throughout 2013."



RAISING THE ROOF!

GRIMBO RULES THE ROOST IN SOUTH AFRICA

Returning to the top step of the podium, Graham Jarvis delivered Husqvarna their first major win in Hard Enduro with victory at the 2013 Roof of Africa.

Missing out on the win in 2012, Jarvis firmly reasserted himself as the champ with a dominant win this time around. In what proved to be one of the toughest editions of the race, the newly mounted Husqvarna rider delivered a master class of mud riding and eased his way to the top of the podium.

Getting his race off to a steady start, Jarvis chased teammate Altus De Wet home for second on day one's time trial. In hot, sunny conditions, De Wet used

local knowledge to his advantage and edged Jarvis out by 13 seconds to take the win. With De Wet winning, it seemed as if Jarvis would have a fierce fight on his hands for the remaining two days.

But on day two the rains came and when it rains in Africa it really rains! Quickly the hard packed rocky mountain trails became incredibly slippery with the gripless terrain playing right into the Brit's hands. With De Wet falling out of contention, Jarvis fought with closest rival Chris Birch (KTM) for the day win.

Finishing second, the Husqvarna rider followed him out at the start of the third and final day. By now conditions

were at their worst, with many riders having spent a night in the mountains unable to complete the previous day's stage.

Chasing down and passing Birch early on, Jarvis put a massive 25 minutes into his rival as they cleared the first climb, the Brit continued to extend his lead and eventually crossed the finish line some 59 minutes ahead of Birch to secure the win.

With Birch following him home for second, Scott Bouverie (KTM) completed the top three. Ending day two in third, Beta's Ben Hemingway looked on course for a podium result but eventually placed fifth.



TADDY'S TITLE#5!

ANOTHER AMERICAN ENDUROCROSS TITLE IN THE BAG FOR BLAZUSIAK

Taddy Blazusiak continued to prove that he is the top dog in Endurocross by collecting his fifth straight AMA EnduroCross Championship in a thrilling final round showdown in Las Vegas. Entering the race tied on points with team-mate Mike Brown, Blazusiak did just enough to secure the title.

In what was the most exciting, dramatic and strangest race witnessed for some time, Blazusiak finished a lowly fifth to claim the championship. Grabbing the holeshot, he initially looked to have the win in the bag until he tipped over in the tight woodpile corner.

That crashed triggered off a multitude of carnage as Brown and half the field crashed beside him while David Knight went one better and parked his Sherco on top of Blazusiak's KTM. Both Brown and Blazusiak remounted almost last while Cody Webb (Beta) escaped to win the race.

Again the duo crashed in the same corner a couple of laps later only this time Blazusiak remounted in front. With the KTM rider making no further mistakes he rode away from Brown to wrap up his fifth straight EnduroCross title.



SALVINI STAYS!

SALVO SIGNS TWO-YEAR DEAL WITH HONDA

Newly crowned Enduro 2 World Champion Alex Salvini confirmed at the recent EICMA motorcycle show in Italy that he will continue with Honda for the next two years. With his future still unknown at the final round of the EWC in France, Salvini was finally able to make the announcement in Milan. Together with Jolly Racing, the Italian will defend his Enduro 2 title.

Changing teams, Frenchman Johnny Aubert has moved from KTM to Beta for 2013 and beyond. The deal – rumoured to be three years – will most likely see Aubert finish out his career with the Italian based team. Now, with a rider of Aubert's calibre on board, Beta will become serious title contenders in 2014.



After missing out last year Travis Pastrana's back on a dirt bike and looking as stylish as ever



FREAKIN' RIDONCULOUS!

THE NITRO CIRCUS LIVE TOUR HITS THE UK FOR THE SECOND YEAR RUNNING AND THINGS HAVEN'T GOT ANY LESS CRAZY...

If someone told you they'd paid upwards of 50 quid to see a redneck in an oversize cowboy hat jump a rocking horse 50 feet through the air while hanging off its hind legs you'd either think they were completely nuts or want in on the action. Judging by the lack of empty seats at the Manchester show of the Nitro Circus Live tour it's safe to say that a lot of people want to see this crazy sh't and considering that the Birmingham leg is a complete sell-outs – and the two capital city stops at Earls Court are near as damn it – it soon becomes clear that it's not just Mancunians who are nuts for Nitro Circus.

The Nitro Circus brand has come along way from being a Travis Pastrana produced

DVD – originally done as a side-project while the Y2K AMA 125cc motocross champion and X-Games gold medallist recovered from yet another motocross injury. The success off those early DVDs – one of which features our very own Godfrey Walker and even contains footage of Editor SuttDawg leading the Romaniacs prologue – spawned a TV series and a movie which in turn lead to live shows which is where we are today.

Nitro Circus Live promises to deliver a high-octane mix of FMX, BMX, skate, ski, snowboard, inline, wheelchair, micro scooter, Barbie buggy, shopping trolley, rocking horse, cooler box, couch, bath tub and even wheelbarrow stunts performed by the leading lights from those particular sports

(yep, even the dude jumping the bath tub is a professional) and it doesn't disappoint.

Although it's hard not to be impressed by the human/gravity powered stars on the Giganta Ramp the real reason for the DBR crew hitting the Phones 4 U arena is to see the stars of the FMX world do their thing. And with a rider roster featuring FMX legends like Blake 'Bilko' Williams, Josh Sheehan, Jarryd McNeil, Steve Mini, Kris Brock, Adam Jones and that man Travis Pastrana it's easy to imagine that flawlessly stuck tricks are order of the day. In fact, the big tricks come so thick and fast during the FMX Train sessions it's hard to choo-choose a favourite although Jones' double grab backflip edges it for us...



Trick of the night for the DBR crew was this double grab backflip by Adam Jones

The Giganta Ramp delivers plenty of thrills

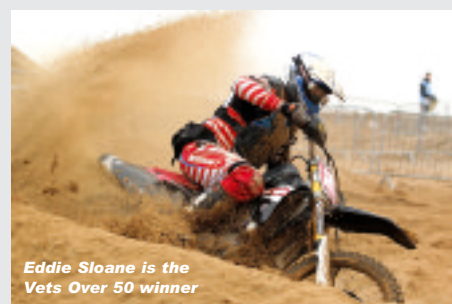




How many bikes is it possible to get in the air at one time? We ran out of fingers and toes before we found an answer



Watson takes the top prize in his Husky debut



Eddie Sloane is the Vets Over 50 winner

DANGEROUS

RUNNING MAN!

LEE HANGS UP HIS MX BOOTS AND PICKS UP SOME RUNNING SHOES...

Words by Lee Dunham Photo by Mike Wood

Some of you are probably aware by now that my racing days have come to an end. I announced my retirement from competitive racing the week I won the AMCA MX1 championship and so far it's been pretty emotional to say the least. It's been awesome having people email in reminding me of past races/memories etc and I'm really happy with what I've achieved and also where I'm going next.

A couple of my bikes were at the Dirt Bike Show so I popped up to have a nose. I did some photos and collected some trophies but the most hitting bit was an interview on stage with Jack Burnicle. It kind of hit home that all of this was coming to an end. Although, after sitting down and looking back I'm really pleased I'm able to look back and smile. Correct me if I'm wrong but as my memory serves me there aren't many UK motocross riders that won titles and then retired at the top of their game.

My plans are to coach and train motocross enthusiasts which is something I really want to do. I would like to offer winter/summer fitness off bike as well as on bike tuition and guidance. I didn't feel I could offer the same impact and support to a rider if they saw me riding mid-pack or even at the back of the pack. So I wanted to relay what I had learnt racing and training to others.

I've always considered preparation to be such a key in racing bikes as it can be said about general life too. For me being prepared for your worst race and making it a good one is where a lot of championships were won. I did read somewhere that you win your championships on your bad days – not on your good ones!

How you go about preparation can be achieved in many different ways. Some will work for you and some not so much but whichever works just stick to it until you master it and you know you're 100 per cent ready and will win. If anyone fancies some tuition on the bike or during the winter training in the gym just send me a message on Facebook or Twitter!

I also wanted to do something for charity so I thought long and hard about what I could do. Not only to keep myself occupied but to do something to benefit other people. I know most of us have a relation or a friend that has had some form of suffering with Cancer so I knew this was where I wanted to help the most. I've had relatives unfortunately pass with the illness but also my old trainer Mark Hucklebridge and one of our team sponsors Steve Bright of Truck Links have suffered too. Some unfortunately are not here but I'm sure they will be kicking me into touch.

So I applied to run the London Marathon. Within a few weeks I had my place within the Children with Cancer UK charity accepted to run for them in the London Marathon. I'm so stoked I am doing it for them! I've set up a Virgin Money Giving site so if at all possible you could spare five minutes check it out and donate for a totally worthy cause –

www.virginmoneygiving.com/leedunham28.

And for those of you that are doing it too keep your elbows up – it's still a race!

I almost forgot! Rhi and I have a puppy! Her names Kobie! And she's pretty much the most hyperactive Cocker Spaniel on water your ever meet. So much so I'm starting to wonder if Rhi is secretly feeding her some of my energy drinks mixes! So this was our early Christmas to each other so I doubt very much there will be much unwrapping going on now on Christmas Day although I can imagine Kobie getting overly excited by pretty much everything and anything she can eat – edible or not! Would tell you some interesting stories about her but to be honest there's nothing interesting about land mines everywhere in the kitchen and a dog who thinks she is a 'one man band' at all hours.

I'd better dash! Christmas wrapping is calling – I'm trying not to fall into the habit of doing it on Christmas Eve! Hope you all have a fantastic festive period and a very prosperous New Year!

Lee Dunham
#28

DOUBLE BUBBLE!

NATHAN WATSON MAKES IT TWO ON THE TROT AT SUPER SKEGGY...

Words and photos by Mike Wood

Nathan Watson kicks off his career with the Evo-Tech Stevens Husqvarna team in fine style by taking an amazing win at the Skegness Beach Race. The 19-year-old leads every lap on his way to victory in the three hour blast and laps every single one of his rivals along the way to finish two laps ahead of runner-up Matt Moffat and Dan Thornhill who takes third.

"I love it here," enthuses Watson afterwards, "The bike was superb and this event is mega – I will definitely be back next year to try and make it a hat-trick of wins".

Although Moff is happy to finish on the podium he's not at all happy with his own performance. "I had a crap start and rode too tense in the early stages causing me to crash. I actually found the second-half of the race easier despite having to stay in second gear when my gearbox started to fail."

So that's it for another super Skeggy and with Nathan Watson vowing to go for the hat-trick in 2014 is there anyone who fancies challenging this bright young star? Well, the provisional date for your diaries is **November 8-9, 2014**.





Eric Geboers has lost none of his style



Ricky Johnson



Guy Cooper charging hard



Thorpey's happy to get the better of RJ!



Brad Lackey



Chuck Sun

CHAMPS REUNITED!

MX LEGENDS CONVERGE IN ITALY FOR ONE MORE RACE...

Photos by Justyn Norek

If you've never heard of the Transborgaro Motocross Trophy race in Italy then don't be too alarmed as details about the event are super sketchy to say the least and even after we found out about it from photographer Justyn Norek it was hard to get some solid info. However, from what we can gather it seems like it's the #1 event in the world for enticing retired superstars into racing again and what's even more amazing is that it's totally free for spectators.

The 2013 edition had great champions like Dave Thorpe, Ricky Johnson, Eric Geboers, Brad Lackey, Danny LaPorte, David Philippaerts, and

Chuck Sun all in attendance although neither Bad Brad or The Door actually raced – the 1982 world champs were there to simply soak up the atmosphere and sign an autograph or two.

Split into age related groups – riders from the 1970s, '80s and then the '90s onwards – competition isn't particularly fierce. That said, Thorpey confessed to Jack Burnicle later that 'although Johnson is a lovely guy he was the bloke he just had to beat in their races'. Fortunately he did! While none of the all-stars won their classes – probably all worn out from signing autographs – both Chuck Sun and DT at least made the podium in their respective groups.



Bad boy Ricky Johnson takes time out from signing autographs to hit the track

RFX PRO SERIES

RACE PARTS

Race FX are really pulling out all the stops with their own range of race products that now includes these Pro Series and Factory Edition clutch lever assemblies. Both are extra strong and include lever pivot bearings and an oversize quick adjuster with the Factory Edition featuring a machined billet perch and the Pro Series units having a forged part instead. Both are top quality items and it's safe to say that whichever one you choose you won't be disappointed with.

There's also the RFX Pro Series F7 (without cross brace) and F8 taper bars have been designed with the racer in mind and are super strong while retaining the right amount of flex and vibration damping for comfort. Both styles are available in a range of bends so it's probably best you visit your local RFX supplied dealer today to see which feels right to you.

Price: F7 Taper bars £59.99

F8 Taper bars £69.99

Pro Series clutchlever assy £64.99

Factory Edition clutch lever assy £89.99

Supplier: racefx.com

Contact: 0845 450 1448



KRYPTONITE SECURITY PRODUCTS

If you like your bike and you want to keep it safe from the undesirables who like to pilfer such things then please arm yourself with some security products from the Kryptonite. Featured here is the super heavy duty New York Legend chain and lock and the Evolution Series 4 disc lock. While locking your prized weapon down with such things can't guarantee it won't go walkies you'll struggle to find anything more secure. Check out the full range at

www.madison.co.uk.

Price: New York Legend

chain and lock £149

Evolution Series 4 disc lock £44.99

Supplier: madison.co.uk

Contact: 0870 034 7226

ISO2 NUTRITION SPORTS NUTRITION PRODUCTS

Sports nutrition specialists ISO2 have delivered two new doozies to the market in the form of Oct-X - a pre-workout supplement to enhance strength, promote recovery and heighten mental focus - and Microvit+ which is multivitamin targeted at peeps who work, play and train hard. Both products are available to buy right now so check out www.iso2nutrition.co.uk to see what offers and discounts are available.

Price: Oct-X £18.99

Microvit+ £17.99 (60 capsules)

Supplier: iso2nutrition.co.uk

Contact: 0800 0842 955

DIRTPUNK MONDO SAHARA DVD

The world's coolest maths teacher and his band of merry men embark on a bonkers journey from London to the Western Sahara following a trail left by their good buddy in this DVD that's literally just landed on our desks. If it's half as good as Austin Vince's previous films - Mondo Enduro, Terra Circa and Roadside USA - it's gonna be a corker so we'll check it out and offer up a full review next month. However, if you can't wait that long or wanna grab an ace Christmas gift for a loved in time for the big day then head online to

www.dirtpunk.co.uk right now.

Price: £18.50

Supplier: dirtpunk.co.uk

Contact: riseup@dirtpunk.co.uk

BOYESSEN SPECTRA SUPERCOOLER WATER PUMP

Boyesen SuperCooler water pump cover and impeller kits are specifically designed to enhance the performance of your engine's cooling system by allowing better coolant flow. That basically allows the engine to run cooler and at a more constant temperature. Boyesen claim the SuperCooler can reduce engine temperatures by up to 10 degrees thanks to their sculpted design, seam free interior, less restrictive bends and a much more efficient impeller and we've had very successful trials with them in the past. What makes 'em extra tasty this time around is the blingy colours they're available in...

Price: £199.70

Supplier: apico.co.uk

Contact: 01282 473190





DRIFT HD GHOST-S ACTION CAMERA

Now twice as powerful as before and packed with features that'll help you capture your dirt biking adventures in stunning high-definition maybe it's time you took a look at the new Drift Ghost-S action camera. With a super long-life battery, Wi-Fi smartphone connectivity, two-way remote, LCD screen and a host of new modes this top-spec helmet cam equips you for HD action right out of the box.

Price: £329.99
Supplier: actioncameras.co.uk
Contact: 0208 965 7679

MOTO-GATE SECURITY WEBBING

Although initially aimed at the Cali bros and their pickup trucks this Moto-Gate is actually a super handy thing for anyone that goes riding on a regular basis and needs to keep spares, fuel cans, tyres or whatever secure in transit. Basically, the Moto-Gate is a durable nylon net with a rubber coated tie down hook at each corner so as well as creating a barrier can be used like a cargo net.

Price: £64.99
Supplier: diversedis.eu
Contact: 01442 879576

OAKLEY SWEET SWAG

"It's getting cold out there, so put on lots of clothes, I am getting so cold, I'm gonna put my clothes on" is not what Nelly sang in his 2002 hit but a much more suitable message for this time of year. So what should you put on? Well, we suggest this Retro Flip beanie, Penny Cross 2.0 crew and a pair of Bread Box sunnies from Oakley. Nice.

Price: Retro Flip beanie £13
Bread Box sunnies £105
Penny Cross 2.0 Crew £45
Supplier: uk.oakley.com
Contact: 00800 6255 3985

GO PRO HERO 3+ BLACK EDITION

The new GoPro Hero3+ is 20 per cent smaller and lighter than previous models and has a much sharper lens. The vastly improved Wi-Fi gubbins means you can connect and download to your smartphone or tablet with ease and the increased battery life will help you catch even more action...

Price: £359.99
Supplier: madison.co.uk
Contact: 0870 034 7226



DURASLIP PTFE LUBRICANT

If you need a light lube in a can then let us point you in the direction of Duraslip which is one of the lightest and slippiest sprays we've ever got our hands on. Perfect for displacing water and protecting metals, Duraslip also stops dirt n' mud sticking so is ideal for those winter races or ride outs. And it also has a ton of other uses around the home and workshop too – it's currently the office favourite for keeping our mountain bike chains running smooth!

Price: £10.20
Supplier: ttproducts.com
Contact: 0161 969 9939



ETNIES CASUAL WEAR

We're big fans of Etnies swag up here at DBR Towers with Sully and The Bear wearing nowt else on their feet when they're not on two wheels. The awesome shoe company also produces a pukka range of casual wear that encompasses the many tribes of moto – FMX, MX and even the bushwhacking lot too. The UK's #1 online store for these cool collections is www.freestylextreme.com and the good news is they've just taken a hot delivery of super-sweet swag from the States so get online and show your credit card who's boss!

Price: see website
Supplier: freestylextreme.com
Contact: 0117 304 9561

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THE FRENCH CONNECTION!

IS GALLIC CRUSADER GAUTIER PAULIN THE MAN
WHO CAN WRESTLE THE MX1 WORLD TITLE AWAY
FROM ANTONIO CAIROLI?

Words and photos by Redeye Media





There aren't many riders who can say they've challenged Tony Cairoli for the MX1 world title. The past few years have seen Clement Desalle, Christophe Pourcel and Steven Frossard remind the now seven-time world champion that there are others who can occasionally match his speed and talent although nobody has managed it over the course of a full MX1 season just yet.

Enter Gautier Paulin. After his rookie year in 2012 where he finished third behind the two protagonists of the class, in 2013 Paulin wasted no time in making his intentions known with victory at the fifth round in Bulgaria, after podiums in Qatar, Thailand and the first Italian grand prix at Arco di Trento. He followed that victory up a week later in Portugal but perhaps his most emphatic GP victory came at Maggiora – in Cairoli's back yard. Unfortunately it all came crashing down (quite literally) while Gautier was leading the first race at the Lausitzring in Germany, and any title aspirations he'd harboured up to that point were gone.

DBR: Let's talk about 'that crash'. Our understanding is that you didn't break any bones so was it just a big impact to the body that kept you away for so long?

GP: "Yeah, when I crashed I hit the head hard so I was knocked out for two minutes. I was out cold. The left quadricep was broken where the footpeg went in causing a seven centimetre opening. When you have a broken muscle, it doesn't seem like a big deal but it's as severe as breaking a major bone. I was having rehabilitation and for my concussion for one week at the hospital in Nice where all the football players from Monaco and Nice go. So that was really good for me and I really want to say thanks to them because I was safe over there. After I'd left hospital I often fell asleep at home but then my fiancé was always with me and I made huge progress in a really small time."

DBR: That's quite a dangerous injury there in the leg?

GP: "Yeah, everything from that crash could be scary but I'm back again in shape and I'm working hard. I'm healthy now but I'm also lucky – although to be lucky you need to work hard to get that luck. And I don't want to get into a spiral of crashing because that can often mean injuries."

DBR: When you were recovering from the concussion did it just feel like a fog was slowly lifting?

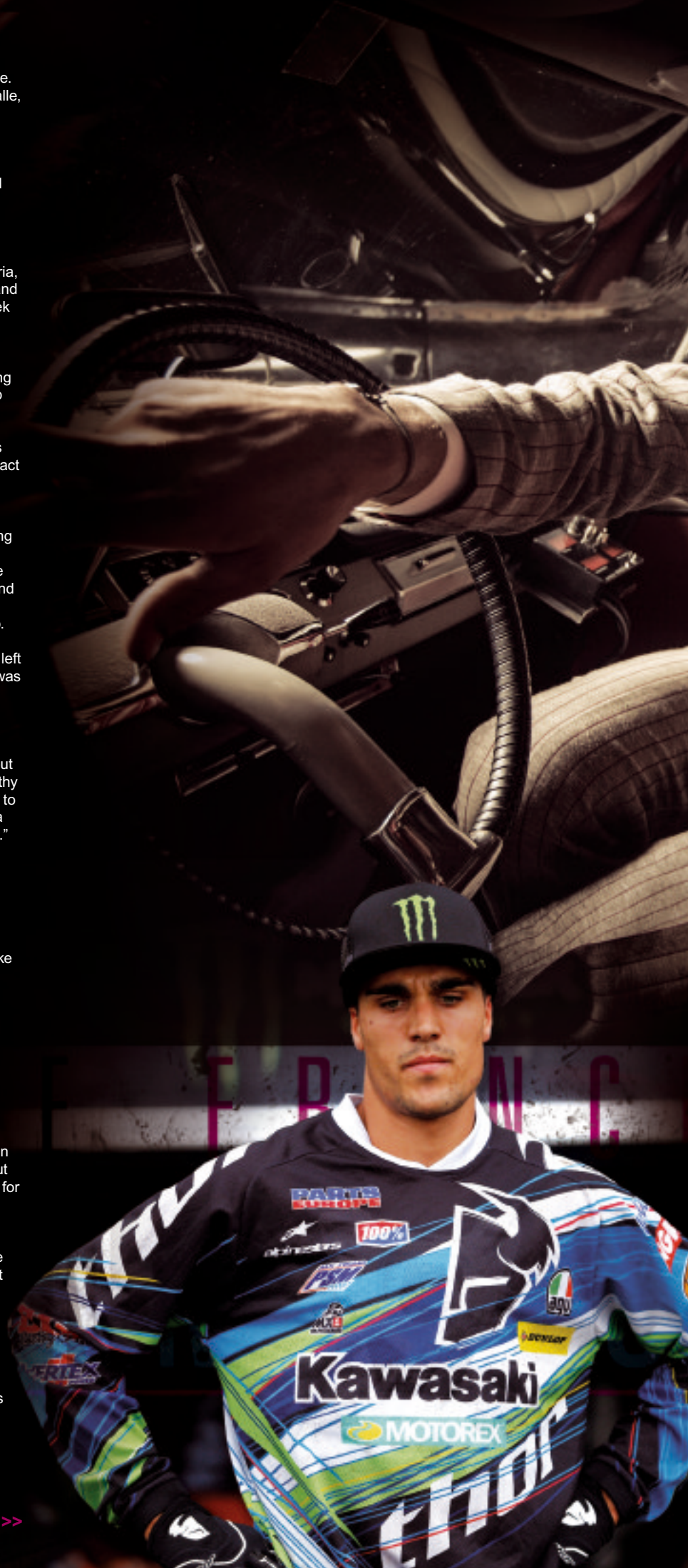
GP: "I'm gonna be honest; I was so slow for some time and when I started riding again it felt like I was drunk. I couldn't see the right line and it was like I'd forgotten a lot about riding. The doctor told me that it would be like this for a while, so I continued to push and ride safe at about 80 per cent. It was tough. I have good people around me who know that we're not only here for the good moments."

DBR: You're now riding MX1 after some years on the smaller MX2 bikes. Did you always feel that you would ride the bigger bike well?

GP: "Yeah, I've known that I could ride a 450 well for a while. When racing in MX2 I was getting bigger and bigger and stronger and stronger. Muscle is heavier than the fat so it was starting to be tough on an MX2 bike but I still believed that I could win and carried the red plate for many rounds. At the end of 2011 I signed to ride a 450 and since then I've had a new goal to be MX1 World Champion. But in general having motocross as a job is something that makes me happy and when I ride I have a great feeling. I love all sports because I like the way it sculpts the body. Even my girlfriend has started doing a lot of sport and I'm proud of that."

DBR: Did you feel that in the MX2 your physical size was a hindrance?

GP: "First of all I just trusted in my chance in MX2 and I tried to make it happen. My goal was to do supercross to develop my technique, my physique and to develop my condition and experience in all those things. I really don't regret anything there. People were telling me that I should move to MX1 early but I always said no, my career is like this. My goal was to do well in MX2 and then move to MX1. This I did in 2012 and the second GP I won, so for the first year it's not so bad." >>



profile

Relaxed and confident no matter what the scenario – Gautier's a lot of fun to hang out with



Gautier's been running race winning pace all year on the factory KX450F



DBR: Kawasaki made an all-new production 450 in 2012 which was introduced to the press in June 2011 and also given to the factory teams. Did you get a new 2013 bike midway through 2012?

GP: "Yes we got the new 2013 bike and at the middle of season at Saint Jean d'Angely – the French GP in 2012. Pretty much everything we try is factory settings, modifications or parts. Sometimes it's only welding on the chassis for added strength, but you really feel the difference. Sometimes you have it on the swing arm, sometimes there's a modification on the engine. Often that modification goes in the next year's production bike or it might be five years later."

"Our bike is pretty much full factory. We have a standard chassis though because it's the one I prefer. I tried many frames and that's the one I prefer otherwise the full bike is completely factory – not only for performance but also to save weight. On the standard machine you can't put some titanium because it's too expensive. It's not like the standard bike is bad, no way; the standard bike is really good but we are racing the world championship so for bike's performance and for my riding style my bike needs to fit perfectly."

DBR: I guess you get to ride the production bikes, so are you able to say maybe in a percentage, how much better your bike is to a production one?

GP: "I'm not lying, I'm here to be honest and every year I like to ride a standard bike just to



The 450 definitely fits Gautier better than the MX2 class machines

see, because this is something I like to know – to keep my mind open. Maybe someone will buy a standard 450 then try mine and discover they like the production bike better. But my factory bike isn't aggressive, it's not all on the top or all on the bottom, it's pretty much stronger everywhere and then the brakes are crazy! Really, really strong! I like to use the front brake very hard. Of course my bike's lighter and the evolution to an improved performance is everywhere. Maybe you'll get it in 2020!"

DBR: It sounds like you really appreciate your bike and your team?

GP: "Yes, I appreciate that. I'm working hard and I appreciate the people around me work hard

and they give me a lot of attention, so I feel for them. I signed for Kawasaki Racing Team when they were going through some bad times – really bad times with no luck and many bad results. I've known the team and Thierry Suzzoni since I turned professional in 2006. He lives one hour from my house and we always kept in touch and he was always like a friend to me. It was nice to sign with him and our plan was to be on the podium in 2012 and then try to win in 2013."

"I think I bring a lot to that team because I really love testing and I love to bring my experience because I have an open mind. And if we win, lose or crash we all keep the same motivation and that's why you see good results from us."



Style for miles ...

DBR: Are you quite technical yourself and interested in the product you ride?

GP: "I am very interested in that. My mind never stops and I'm always thinking where I can improve. I'm not someone who's going to do something that I haven't thought about first. I really know my bike and how it's set up and I know exactly how I rode last year in Lierop with which settings and everything. This is pretty much in my life you know. All that I do, I want to control it all. I have people around me but in the end I make all the decisions and that's pretty much me. My mind never stops and I always have ideas and passions and I'm always on – always thinking and yeah, I'm always on!"

DBR: Was the GP of Maggiora this year the peak of your career so far?

GP: "The peak of my career will be next year. I'm a person who wants to find perfection and I think now I start to have that possibility and to see that I can be 100 per cent. Before I never was but now I have the right people around me. The 450 is my bike and everything is set. I really feel good so it's all rolling perfectly and I think the best moments are coming. For sure I had some good memories of my small career you but I'm only 23 this year so I'm really waiting and I will work so hard to make it happen and to have the best moments in the future."

DBR: You were so emotional in Maggiora when

you delivered that fantastic result. What was that emotion and how did you feel?

GP: "I come from a family where we don't show emotion. My dad never tells me that he's happy for me. And my mum... she's really close to me but still, the emotion you know, we don't... I don't know – it's strange. We think things, but we don't say them and that's a little bit how I was, but since I am with Clementine, my fiancé, now I'm more open – she's opened my eyes. Before I was enjoying life but would never say I am happy. Now I say it."

"Before Maggiora I was working so hard. I was surprised that I was crying on the podium but I remember all the training I did in the winter – sometimes you have bad moments, >>>



Gautier will be going all out to claim the MX1 world title in 2014



especially cycling in the freezing cold. Anything can happen in life and this day was the trophy of my work. It was a really good win, really good riding. I wasn't 100 per cent happy because I didn't win both races, but again I'm starting to be happy with what I'm achieving and that I need to give to Clementine because she's opened my mind a bit and changed the person I was. It was good to be true and to see all the people around me who were also emotional because I think it was a nice race and I was so happy to give that to the public. We really had a good time together."

DBR: Tell us a little more about your training...

GP: "I'm always training hard. When we spoke about the emotion in Maggiora it's not because it was so hard and I want it to stop. No! It's so hard and I love that. It's something crazy but I love that it's hard. Sometimes you need to reach your goal, it's not always easy but you need to continue. I am at one stage of my life where I know a lot more about my body than



THE FRENCH CONNECTION

when I was 16 and I have good people around me. Yeah, I have a good feeling.

"One thing I like to do though is criterium cycle races. So, we meet like at 08.00 in the morning and then we race for 130km or for 70km or 150km, it depends. It's always cool to be racing with 80-100 people around and to be riding together. Sometimes it's scary because you go fast and I'm not used to being that close to all the cyclists. But I feel good when I finish with... not the top guys but close."

DBR: Do you have a personal trainer?

GP: "My trainer lives in Antibes in the southwest of France, so it's 50km from my house. He trains one or two celebrities, many golfers and professional footballers. He has one rider in Moto GP and some other road racers, car racers and also some boxers and kick-boxers. He has no link to motocross apart from riding a little when he was young. We work really well together."

DBR: Did you ever think about America in your career – you're still quite young?

GP: "I think about it, but actually my goal is 2014 now and I'm first looking for a world title. I'll push to the end to achieve that goal but I never close any door – if I need to go to the USA then why not? If I go there I will be really happy because I love supercross and I love motocross. America would be a new goal but if I go I'll go when I'm in my best condition otherwise I'm not going."

DBR: Are you convinced that you can be World Champion in 2014?

GP: "I give my all for this – I will see. On paper everything is right and I want that title but I want to win it by winning races, not just collecting points. If I can do this going 1-1, this is what I love."

DBR: Finally, let's talk about as a person – not a famous motocross racer. What things do you enjoy outside of motocross?

GP: "We like holidays with no internet and no phone! On the beach, just with the sun – that's what we like. I like movies, but only thriller

movies – that's what I like. Clementine likes girl movies but I don't like them so much. But you remember I said I'm always on? Well, apparently I even speak in my sleep. Anyway, I like shopping, big cities, good restaurants, good wine and being with friends. I like cars and good design. I'm not a bling-bling type of person but I like quality and everything I do is like a gift from my profession."

DBR: Okay, one more final question! Do you like to see images of yourself in magazines and sponsor's advertisements?

GP: "I love to see my photos. I really like it and to see good photos is a bonus and a result of a big effort you make. Once you're captured in a photo it's there forever and if it's a good moment that's captured, it's great. I want quality in my life and I don't want to try to be someone I'm not. I'm living my life like I what to. I like the people I have around me and if I don't like someone I tell them why. Yeah, that's pretty much it. I like simple things you know, just simple and I think that's fair. Quality and fairness. That's it."

bercy sx

The Bercy team cram a top class track on to the Palais Omnisports floor

PARISIAN POWER!

DBR HEADS TO PARIS TO SEE WHY THE BERCY SUPERCROSS IS EUROPE'S PREMIER INDOOR SPECTACLE...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer

The international motocross season shifts into neutral for 2013 with Bercy bringing the year to a dramatic close. This was one of the better Bercy meetings in recent years largely thanks to the duelling forces of Team Honda Muscle Milk duo Justin Barcia and Trey Canard. By now the results will be familiar as well as knowledge of Barcia's controversial and, some might say, 'typical' block pass that robbed his team-mate of Saturday night success and affected the overall result.

Walking into the stadium the first impressions are always the same; how on earth does a supercross layout fit into this place? Compact and imposing with the 11,000 seating capacity forming steep walls of colour and noise it is easy to feel the relentless intensity of the sport. There is not a moment's rest for the riders, directly from

the 30-yard start straight into the tight first turn and across a whoops section that runs the length of the stadium floor. At one end of the arena the racers disappear from a rhythm section into the renowned corridors leaving tyre marks on the walls as they skirt with danger, road race style. A switchback in the tunnel leads to a fast sweep into the whoops.

It is captivating stuff to see a lap hit at speed, and the whole process takes less than 45 seconds. Lodged next to the narrow start gate (the Main event will see 12 riders setting off from two rows) is the new Joker Lane, transplanted from Las Vegas and the Monster Energy Cup. It is more of a Joker 'chicane' and involves a heavy charge back down to the first corner and would not be as decisive as it was at the Sam Boyd Stadium although incredibly Andrew Short did manage to miss it on Friday night –

Dungey/Villopoto style.

Inside the gloomy paddock area the riders have precious little privacy and the American Honda bay is a hive of hangers-on and fans through the three days. When not negotiating practice, Superpole (the winner bagging a 1000 euro cheque although the timing system appears to be very dodgy, showing one set of figures and then confirming another), the 'Americain' eliminator – where three three-lap sprints cut the field down from eight to five then to three racers and decides pole position – are then followed by the Semi-final Heats. Some time around 11pm the 15-lap Main event finally gets underway. Oh, and some of the best Freestylers in Europe (Vila, Torronteras, Pages) fill in the programme with 15 minute displays that gather animated responses from the public.

People like Xavier Audouard and Eric



WHO WE SPOKE TO

JUSTIN **BARCIA**

He of 'Bam Bam' fame. In 2014 will start his second year in the 450SX/MX class and was a winner on his first and only visit to Bercy in 2010. Would be overall victor in 2013 with 1-1-2 results.

TREY **CANARD**

Honda favourite and such a stylish and focussed rider. Made his first trip to Bercy after losing to Barcia the previous week in Genoa. Finished second overall with 2-2-1.

ANDREW **SHORT**

AMA veteran, former double winner at Bercy, riding a KTM and would complete the Bercy podium with 5-3-3.

GAUTIER **PAULIN**

Factory Kawasaki rider and main star of the show for the locals. Strong start to the weekend but arm-pump issues and a conservative attitude cost him the podium.

Winner of the Superpole on Saturday. Fourth overall with 3-5-4.

COOPER **WEBB**

The Yamaha youngster (being trained by former GP rider Gareth Swanepoel) turned 18 at Bercy – his first visit to France. An impressive sixth overall with 11-4-5.

JORDI **TIXIER**

MX2 world championship runner-up riding the factory KTM 350SX-F. Would crash several times and have sublime moments of speed but would only post 6-11-10.

ERIC **PERONNARD**

Legendary promoter of the U.S. Open, Bercy and Endurocross.

STEVE **MATTHES**

RacerX journalist and OTOR magazine columnist.

FRANCOIS **LEMARIEY**

Team Manager of the factory Kawasaki Racing Team that announced a new sponsorship deal with Monster Energy at Bercy.



Peronnard have been tapping into a well of French fascination for this Bercy for over 30 years. The secrets are quite obvious. The fans pay either 80 or 60 euros for a ticket to see some of the best (make sure your Americans are there), take on the local riders (ensure a decent home contingent), digest a show (Freestyle and the lengthy opening ceremony complete with humorous opening video segment – this year Paulin and Tixier kidnapped the Americans at Charles De Gaulle airport) and feel the glamorous edge of what the sport can offer – danger, speed, jumps and the cut-and-thrust.

This edition prospers despite the absence of Ken Roczen who withdrew less than two weeks beforehand but can count on promising teenager Cooper Webb who outperforms a disappointing Wil Hahn who is clearly not yet at home on the

Geico CRF450R. Monster Energy are prevalent – as they are in most high-profile motocross races these days – and take advantage of the French setting to announce a two year deal with the Kawasaki Factory Racing team and extend their partnership across the 'green' army in MXGP.

On Friday it is immediately clear that Barcia and Canard are getting into a groove. Paulin is also lively but it is the whoops where the yanks carve that second or half-a-second a lap. Barcia's loose and athletic style is wonderful to contrast with the solid fluidity of Canard. The pair are tenths apart but Barcia has the edge with his team-mate struggling with illness and trying to get to grips with the demands of Bercy. Barcia wins every outing on a moist sculpture of dirt...

Trey Canard seems happy enough with second overall behind team-mate Barcia



FRIDAY

Trey Canard: "Doing the video was different! The opening ceremonies in America are exciting but not that long or detailed. It was cool and the French definitely gave us a treat with that."

Andrew Short: "I think this is my seventh Bercy. I haven't been since 2007 – about the same time we had kids. It is fun to come back and it has changed quite a bit. The paddock is different. Maybe not so many Americans and it is not as laid back and a bit more serious. The crowd makes it special and the city obviously. The history behind this race makes it one of my favourites."

Justin Barcia: "It doesn't get much better than it did today. The track was tight, fun and rutty and kinda fits my style. Some big American style whoops. That was cool but they get rutted and crazy. Trey and Paulin were on my toes all night. The reception was a lot better than two years ago when I got a little bit too much into it with Aranda. That was not good! [Barcia smashed into Aranda when over-taking and was booed by the crowd]."

Trey Canard: "The first night was not my strongest but I learned a lot about how the whole thing works. It is definitely a different race. I didn't even know about the elimination sprints. I thought it was just Supercross and the Main... I didn't know we'd be doing around 65 laps! Once I got that into my head it was a bit better."

Barcia: "A lot of the fans can't really see the track in the tunnels but we get up to fourth gear wide open, make a tight turn and then get back on it really hard straight into the whoops."

Short: "It is not as crazy as the Isle of Man because those guys have some big balls. On a 250F it was just about perfect [going down the tunnels]. On a 450 it is a bit much. You can't quite open it up and you have to respect it. It makes this event unique and there is nowhere else that has that. A lot of riders have been down those halls. It is part of Bercy. When you think of this race then you think of the halls, of pinning it and going crazy."

Canard: "In the second practice I clipped a hay bale with my front brake and it sent me flying. I would say that this is Arenacross on steroids. It is tough and high intensity and a lot of laps."

Barcia: "The Joker lane is weird. Obviously there is not much room to work with it but I think it's cool. No room to make any mistakes. As a racer you don't really want to do a Joker Lane. You just want to put in your fifteen laps. [On the Dungey and Villopoto errors at the Monster Cup] I still don't know how those guys missed it because I'm like 'when am I gonna hit it? When am I gonna hit it? When am I gonna hit it?! That's all I'm thinking about.'"

Gautier Paulin: "Many people know I like supercross and the track is larger than a normal layout. The dirt is good but I know it will be different and drier tomorrow. I started at the front but I started to feel my arms pumping up and from there I said to myself 'I'm here for fun, not to make a big mistake' so I looked at the long-term. Justin and Trey are really focussed on their supercross so it is tough to ride with them but also beneficial. They are good people and it was fun to make that opening video clip. I am happy that the people at Bercy are confident in me. I wasn't sure about doing it at first but I'm really glad I came along."

Francois Lemairey: "For us the main target is the motocross world championship and that is the request from the factory. When Gautier asked us about riding at Bercy we had nothing against that because we know that it is the biggest supercross event in Europe and in front of a lot of public. We know it is good for brand image and especially in France where Gautier is quite famous. He does not attend that many races in France so to go to Bercy is good for him. We are relaxed after the GP season so we don't have any goals apart from having fun and staying safe."

Paulin: "We made the presentation of the team with Monster Energy as our new sponsor and I think the partnership will help a lot."

Lemairey: "We had to do some suspension tests. The base of the bike is still the GP set-up but we adjusted some engine mappings and other things. No massive changes, but there was

some extra work for the team. We have an open mind to find the best setting for the riders and that also means the best systems and the best products."

Eric Peronnard: "I really reject the notion that supercross is not motocross. It is one sport. When I see 30,000 spectators buying a ticket at Bercy and then also at Geneva and Genoa I think that motocross is doing well in Europe and there are people getting excited about it. We owe it to ourselves not to segment the sport too much because if we do that the smaller we get. So this is 'off-road motorcycling' and supercross is maybe the pinnacle."

Lemairey: "When I was a kid Bercy was the most famous event for supercross. Now that I am in the system, so to speak, I see it becoming more professional and we have a job to do here. The French public are 'very hot' for supercross and the Americans can see that."



SATURDAY

If Friday was busy then Saturday is heaving. It feels like the rain does not stop outside and fans find cover and leap puddles. The sandwich shops and restaurants opposite the stadium make a killing and it is almost impossible to pass through the narrow external paddock area where the majority of riders and team staff make the regular trip to the Novotel hotel that is a spray of roost from the arena entrance.

Short and Webb have found improvements while Paulin struggles in the 'Americain' and has a poor gate pick. Canard is also happier and quicker. The 23 year old would overtake and lead Barcia in the main event until the Friday winner would attempt a tough block pass out of the whoops and in the final turn. Canard is forced into the barrier (and would later need a broken front wheel changed) and Barcia wins.

The pair do not communicate on the podium and the mood is strained back in the paddock afterwards. Barcia is sheepish, the usually stoic Canard quietly seething. Webb wins a thrilling

fight for fourth with Paulin that has the stands on their feet. The pair exit the fateful last corner side by side but the novice cuts across the Kawasaki to make sure of his position. The din made by the Bercy hall clearly has an effect on the stars of the show. Canard immediately pulls towards the stand after the chequered flag and begins to throw his kit into the baying hordes.

Canard: "I felt that the main event could have been mine. I made a great pass and had the momentum to continue to win the race but he made 'that room' work for him. I wasn't able to get him."

Barcia: "I was a little slower tonight. He was riding really good. I was a little tight and not myself. I did get kinda lucky to win that last one because I had to make an aggressive move."

Canard: "It was fine [the atmosphere in the team] until Saturday night and there was definitely a bit of tension. I just blew it off and tried to focus on my racing and not other

people's decisions. I tried to learn from it and will take it back to America and won't let it happen again."

Barcia: "When you have a team-mate and you are that close in speed then the tension is going to build. Trey got me in the whoops and I passed him back with a block pass in the next corner. People will say different things but that is just the way I race and I don't give up that easily. Aggressive/dirty is one thing but aggressive racing is what gets me excited. Team-mate or not it was great racing and Trey rode so well."

Canard: "I tried not to [keep some fire inside for Sunday]. I think you make bad decisions when you are racing for reasons other than to do well for what you believe in. We are team-mates and I want to treat everyone the way I want to be treated...and not do that. I guess that can bite me sometimes but in the race of life if you play that way then it is losing to me and I don't want to lose that race." >>





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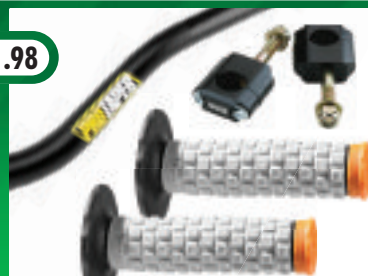
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bercy sx

Gautier Paulin is the best of the rest behind the two Honda team-mates

Barcia: "The inside gate is the deciding factor. This track is so narrow and through the whoops he was good but I checked up and felt a bit of 'bam bam' action so that was cool. I wanna be King of Bercy but at the same time I want to go home safe. I thought it was a good race and I had a lot of fun. Hopefully tomorrow I won't be so tight and get the job done. I think the crowd were crazier tonight. They say the Paris crew come on the first night and then a lot of people from other places make it tonight. I thought they were great."

Webb: "The crowd is really wild here. The last two laps I could hear so much shouting and I couldn't figure out whether it was for Trey and Justin or me and Gautier battling. I was thinking 'man, something is going on!' it was awesome and really amps you up and makes you want to give you all. It is definitely different to the States."

Paulin: "I want to do well inside and I want to do well 'outside' of the stadium. So I am really giving my best."

Webb: "On the last lap I knew he was all over me. I had to hit the whoops the best I could and really went for it on the last lap and so did he. Once he bumped me I thought 'there is no way you are getting by me' I held my own. I won't lose any sleep about it. He's a racer and so am I. It was last turn, last lap. He came in...and I made sure he wasn't going to beat me."

Short: "At Bercy the crowd is always electric on Saturday night and then is a bit calmer on Sunday but the riders are usually then much closer together. Tonight the atmosphere was really good and I felt my riding was a lot better. Friday was really tough for me to get into. I was trying too hard, breathing too hard and had arm-pump. I was much more relaxed tonight. It is great training for the upcoming season because sprint races really push you to the max and you cannot get that at home."

SUNDAY

The last day at Bercy. By now the schedule is slick and it feels like some of the small delays have been ironed out. There is no morning malaise for the paddock as practice starts early and the show begins in the middle of the afternoon as opposed to 8pm.

News of the Barcia/Canard dice must have gathered traction as the stadium again feels full and it is tricky to spot empty seats. Barcia perhaps feels some of the strain. He crashes in the Heat race, only narrowly winning by a similar 'Canard' block pass on Short that is more lenient. He then also falls in the eliminator, scooping the following Canard as well, giving the Americans their worst Main Event gate pick of the weekend.

It creates some frantic opening scenes of the last sprint of Bercy 2013. Paulin and Short with the excitable Soubeyras lead the way and the Hondas needs the better part of four laps to make their way to the front. Barcia hounds Canard, even through the backmarkers, but does not push the limit safe in the knowledge that second place will give him the King of Bercy crown by one point.

Americans have now won the coveted title for the past six years. Outside the rain has been replaced by a cold wind. The arena swiftly empties and the paddock is cleaned from 72 hours of activity – the Starbucks coffee cups from the American zone of enclosure are swept

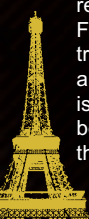
away as thoughts turn to dinner, after-show drinks and flights home.

The Novotel reception is packed with luminaries like Jean Michel Bayle (who has a parade lap with Stefan Everts every night and is also on commentating duties) to Freestylers keen for a beer to fans hoping to mingle with motocross heroes. The buzz of Bercy is fading for another year.

Paulin: "I've really enjoyed myself and I have good memories already. The track got easier and easier through the weekend and it got tougher to make the difference [on the others]. I was very precise and didn't crash, and got good starts so that is all positive. I was keen to be crisper on the bike today, to be better in the lines and cleaner with the other riders. I had arm-pump in qualifying but the races were fine."

Canard: "It was great to leave with a win and I definitely needed that. It has been a long time since I have won a moto over 10 laps. It is a big thing to be grateful for and I think I rode pretty good. I'm really happy with the team and this has been a great race for us. We have pushed each other hard and that does us a favour going into Anaheim."

Short: "The track is difficult with lots of edges and bumps and the whoops are getting cut-up. It is the nature of Bercy that the first night is a bit sticky and rutted, the second





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- 2007:** Chad Reed (Aus, Yamaha)
- 2006:** Christophe Pourcel (Fra, Kawasaki)
- 2005:** Andrew Short (USA, Honda)
- 2004:** Andrew Short (USA, Honda)
- 2003:** David Vuillemin (Fra, Yamaha)
- 2002:** Grant Langston (AFS, KTM)
- 2001:** David Vuillemin (Fra, Yamaha)
- 2000:** 250: David Vuillemin (Fra, Yamaha)
- 2000:** 125: Justin Buckelew (USA, Yamaha)
- 1999:** 250: David Vuillemin (Fra, Yamaha)
- 1999:** 125: Rodrig Thain (Fra, KTM)
- 1998:** 250: Larry Ward (USA, Suzuki)
- 1998:** 125: Nick Wey (USA, Kawasaki)
- 1997:** 250: Jeff Emig (USA, Kawasaki)
- 1997:** 125: David Vuillemin (Fra, Yamaha)
- 1996:** 250: Ryan Hughes (USA, Kawasaki)
- 1996:** 125: David Vuillemin (Fra, Yamaha)
- 1995:** 250: Jeremy McGrath (USA, Honda)
- 1995:** 125: David Pingree (USA, Kawasaki)
- 1994:** 250: Mike LaRocco (USA, Kawasaki)
- 1993:** 250: Jeremy McGrath (USA, Honda)
- 1993:** 125: Mickael Pichon (Fra, Honda)
- 1992:** 250: Jeff Stanton (USA, Honda)
- 1992:** 125: Doug Henry (USA, Honda)
- 1991:** 250: Jean Michel Bayle (Fra, Honda)
- 1991:** 125: Jeff Emig (USA, Yamaha)
- 1990:** 250: Jean Michel Bayle (Fra, Honda)
- 1990:** 125: Jeff Emig (USA, Yamaha)
- 1989:** Ricky Johnson (USA, Honda)
- 1988:** Jeff Ward (USA, Kawasaki)
- 1987:** Ricky Johnson (USA, Honda)
- 1986:** David Bailey (USA, Honda)
- 1985:** Johnny O'Mara (USA, Honda)
- 1984:** Johnny O'Mara (USA, Honda)
- 1984:** David Bailey (USA, Honda)



night is perfect and then the third day it is pretty dry. They fill the holes with some loose dirt so it gets dusty. I feel that they do a good job with the maintenance though, better than I remember. It allows the track to remain raceable and to keep the speed up, also keeping it safe."

Barcia: "The track was tight and the walls are close so the danger zone is real. I cannot count how many near misses I had. Luckily luck was on my side."

Jordi Tixier: "I don't feel so bad about it. I got good starts all the time so I'm pretty happy. I made a good rhythm but I could be better in the whoops. I lost out in the Main Events all the time because of that. I didn't get injured and I was happy to ride in front of the fans. The public are really great. I would like to come back it is always very emotional to ride here because of that crowd. I'm going to stop riding now because I feel a bit tired and the season has been long. I'm going to find an island somewhere!"

Canard: "One of the coolest parts is that my wife and I didn't get to go on our honeymoon so this week we spent time in Rome before coming here. I think the three days in Paris have been great for fitness. You cannot create that 'race environment' no matter how badly you want to with two lap sprints at home. You won't have that tension in front of the crowd and with other riders alongside - all those nerves and jitters. It was really good thing for me to be here. The races themselves were not that long

so that's not too positive for the conditioning but the fact that it was three days made up for it. I've struggled with first lap intensity in the past so those three lappers and the Superpole are perfect for me."

Short: "I hope this is not my last Bercy but being 31 years of age you never know!"

Barcia: "I think it is going to be really good going into the off-season and this race has helped bring us up to speed. We were going extremely fast and were on a bit of a different level compared to the other guys."

Paulin: "We will now try some new parts on the bike but then we will head off for some holidays. Clementine and I really cherish those 10 to 15 days in the sun where we leave the phones and the internet behind."

Steve Matthes: "Everyone should put the Bercy Supercross on their bucket list of things to see before they go six feet under. It's an incredible race that the promoters work very hard on to make sure the customer is satisfied."

Peronnard: "There are opportunities in the future. This is a 'Monaco' for motocross in Europe. Like Namur was. This race has done a lot of good to the motocross world and especially in Europe. What else is there to compare it to? Geneva is good, but it is not Paris."





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TIME FOR CHANGE?

IS THE ACU MAXXIS BRITISH MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION OR HAS IT LOST ITS WAY WITH SHORT RACES AND LONG DAYS? WE ASKED A CROSS SELECTION OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN BRITAIN'S PREMIER MX SERIES THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE MATTER...

Words by Jeff Perrett Photos by Sutt'y

Let's start with a fact and that's that opinions aren't facts – they are only opinions. You can't really argue with opinion although that never stops human beings trying to prove different as we constantly air our views and sometimes argue over trivial facts until we go blue in the face. That in itself is weird when you consider that people actually go red in the face and not blue – but whatever! Nobody is ever wrong when

you're clashing swords over opinion because you can only ever win an argument when you're factually correct – in my opinion!

Right now there's some debate going around the British MX fraternity regarding the ACU's Maxxis British championship and whether it's moving in the right direction. Jake Nicholls and Roger Magee are two guys who have stepped up to the plate and openly and honestly put forward their opinions through social media on what change is necessary to evolve and improve the series. Fundamentally

their opinion is to return to some of the ideas from the good old days.

It's a very interesting debate that we're sure you'll also have an opinion on so get involved at www.facebook.com/dbrmagazine. It's definitely a subject that intrigued us enough to ask various people in the industry including Brian Higgins – the man at the helm of the Maxxis British championship – on their opinion. Who's right or wrong? Well nobody really but whose opinion do you agree with?



BRIAN HIGGINS

ACU/MAXXIS BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP CHAIRMAN/ORGANISER

"In the past three years we've built up a much closer working relationship with all of the teams and we go and see all 13 of them once or twice a year and take feedback from them. If something works well for someone they'll want to keep that but that might not work well for someone else – we have to try and get the balance right.

"I can understand why the GP teams want longer races but it would appear that we're only going to have two teams from this country that are racing in the world championship in 2014. I'm not being complacent and I'm not being big headed but sometimes we have to take the view that the British championship with effectively 96 riders is perhaps more important to them than the four riders doing the GPs.

"When we switched to the three moto format three years ago it was a massive decision. Physically for the lesser riders the 30 minute motos are too long but 20 minutes encompasses the band of riders we have racing the championship.

"We do take the spectators into account with our decisions. They like to see the starts so that was another factor in going to three races and they also like to see short, sharp racing. It's the current view of the championship promoter that 30 minutes are just too long for races. Having said that we understand about the long day and it might be that when the time schedule comes out for 2014 the day will be clipped

a little shorter.

"Those apposed to the three moto format would like us to believe that 50 per cent of the public leave after the second block of races but it's not as big of an exodus as you'd think. I'd like to point out that when we put out the original schedule for the three races the teams moaned at us that there wasn't enough time between races to prepare the bikes so we took that on board and made the hour and a half rule. You see – it's a balance.

"Superpole has probably just about run its course. While some people don't like it, it is a different spectacle to what others do. We will never do anything without long consultation with the teams. I've openly put out a statement on the championship website that the current view is that 2014 will be the last year of the Superpole but we'll start talking about that in March/April of next year. It will be in for next year but my gut feeling is that it will be taken out of the schedule for 2015 and I'm happy to say that now.

"I think generally our media output has improved and now we have a good relationship with most of the media. The media in general are very supportive of the Maxxis British championship. Sometimes, some freelance journalists dabble a little bit and don't always find out all of the facts and that's when some of the negative remarks start and then of course the first person I blame is the editor of that publication for

putting it out there. What really gets to me is when we don't have right of reply at the same time. If an editor phones me up and asks me what I think of this or that then I'll give an honest reply. When that doesn't happen we get drawn into long term arguments and it can escalate.

"The output of the championship regarding video content is a real difficult one. What I've got to say is the first thing we have to do is to protect the championship and our sponsors – especially Maxxis tyres who are our title sponsor. Sky Sports is screened worldwide and it gets into Taiwan which is very important to Maxxis. I have to protect that short time spell before it goes out on TV and Sky have categorically said that if too much content is going on to social media websites, YouTube and that kind of thing ahead of the TV schedule then they are not going to place it in their programming.

"The reverse of that is, yeah, we want the short three or four minute clips on various websites and we haven't got a problem with that but they've got to realise it's got to be controlled. If Maxxis really had their way entirely everything that goes on those sites would be filmed by Greenlight but we live in the real world and realise that's not possible. I feel like the media and those who have worked with us over the past few years understand that and for those who wish to play the game properly we'll allow that to continue and won't put any restrictions on it as long as they are short clips.

"We're conscious of our competition but not complacent. We do look over our shoulder and see what the other championships are doing but I'm a firm believer that if we service our product right there is no doubt among the manufactures and the importers that the ACU Maxxis British championship is the primary one they want to win. We realise that and we want to give them a good platform to showcase their riders, their talent and more importantly their machines and we'll do the best we can with our championship without worrying too much about the others.

"A championship can go stale if you keep going to the same old places year after year so we've tried to freshen it up by going to new venues this year. You'll notice that we've swapped dates for FatCat too – it was the first round for 2103 but it's going to be the last round for 2014. We want to create a little bit of competition between the organising clubs just to keep them on their toes so to bring in new venues and organisers is really good.

"Don't forget the difficulty we have is that it's quite easy to bring in new venues; I could probably think of a dozen venues where we could go but you have to have the organiser to go with it and that's sometimes the difficulty. I can tell you now there's a fresh venue coming on to the calendar for 2015 in the east of England. We're working a fair way in advance on the series – there's always a lot of planning and discussion goes into the championship."



BRYAN CONNOLLY

BRYAN MACKENZIE'S MECHANIC

"The biggest issue for me is that you get such a long time in the morning between practice and the races and then it just all goes crazy. If something does go seriously wrong with the bike then it's a struggle to make it to the start of the next one even when you have a spare.

"I think Superpole wastes too much time. If they put extra championship points on it I think it would be worth doing but at the moment it's kind of something and nothing.

"As far as three motos against two, on a personal level it makes no difference to me. I like three motos because there are more races to watch and I guess it depends how well you're doing in them. If you're leading you'll want them to be 20 minutes but if you've gone down in the first corner you wish they were 30 minutes!"





special feature

Two-time MX2 champ Elliott Banks-Browne is another rider who'd like to see longer motos

ELLIOTT BANKS-BROWNE

CURRENT ACU MAXXIS BRITISH MX2 CHAMPION

"I think it should be 30 minute motos because it's better preparation for GPs but 20 minute motos are intense and you have to ride your balls off. I guess you can't please everyone but for those of us who have motocross as our job I think it makes it harder having 20 minute motos. I could probably not train all year and still do alright – I wouldn't win but I reckon I'd do okay. If you didn't train as a GP racer you'd be in serious trouble and the thing is the Maxxis British championship is the professional British title for us pros to shoot for so I reckon it should be at a certain standard. 30 minute motos should be that standard that everyone is shooting for. You wouldn't think those extra 10 minutes make a difference but they really do. A lot can happen in that time, but that doesn't really happen between 10

and 20 minutes because so many riders can ride pretty much flat out.

"I think the championship would be better if there was more for the fans to do other than just watching the racing too. I can understand why they've gone for three motos but I think four main championship races and bit more stuff happening around the place would keep the fans happy. I'd like to see them put some more money into that side of the championship.

"They do a good job and it's one of the best championships in the world and I'm proud to say I'm British motocross champion but I feel they could be doing more with the whole look and feel of the series – it needs modernising. I think the riders will always do their bit and make good racing because we're all so

committed but I think there could be a lot more done to create more atmosphere for the public and then hopefully more people would be starting turning up.

"When I started racing the British championship I thought it was massive but now I don't think it's as big as it was – I feel like I've progressed but the championship hasn't. I'm not trying to give anyone a good slating here but I think it needs a good kick up the arse with its promotion and marketing. It would help everyone because it means that teams would have more of a chance to bring in more sponsors. If it's more of an event to go to and more professional then I'm sure more people would get into it and then it would just snowball."



MIKEY RUTHERFORD

FREELANCE VIDEOGRAPHER

"The ACU have told me that I can no longer shoot video clips for websites or teams. Not being able to film for the teams or riders means I'm going to struggle to make a living out of filming motocross as a freelance videographer. It pisses me off because it's not just about me trying to earn a living, I'm also there to try and help promote the riders, the series and the sport that I love."

Jake's very clear about what he feels for the Maxxis format



JAKENICHOLLS

STR KTM UK MX1 TEAM RIDER

"The three 20 minute motos are just no good for me and to be honest I personally don't feel they're any good for anyone. Out of all the people who have read my comments on Twitter I've had two people disagree and basically they argued that it will be better for me because it's more sprint training for my speed at GPs but that's not the case. I just think 20 minute motos are too short – it's not a proper motocross race because fitness has always been a big part of the sport. As a rider I don't find them fun and I don't get a lot out of it. If they were 25 minutes plus two laps then I could probably live with that but it feels like a schoolboy race. The schedule is too long as well with them trying to fit in the three motos. I don't understand why they changed the format – when was there ever a problem with the two 30 minute motos?"

"I'm a little bit miffed that more riders haven't had their say on it. I know I might be a little outspoken on this but I also know a lot of the lads feel the same way. There are a lot of people that agree with me but won't say anything and everyone needs to if we're going to make the ACU change it back to two motos. I'd like to see some of the other riders have more backbone and speak up – they're not going to get thrown out of the

series for wanting change. Knowing I would have to come back and race 20 minute motos was playing on my mind when it came to signing for Steve Turner but then I heard that Shaun Simpson was probably going back to Roger Magee's team and I thought there was a good chance of it changing to two motos.

"I put something out on Twitter and Facebook about it and I was quite convinced that the ACU would change it to three 25 minute motos because I started to hear rumours that they might but it now doesn't look like that will happen either. I hope this doesn't sound big headed but I thought that with Shaun and I present that they had a good chance of getting the championship back to how it was with GP riders racing and more importantly wanting to be there. Without getting too sidetracked it puts a lot into perspective when you consider that Lupino and Tixier are still being paid by their national federations.

"I read Dave Thorpe's comment that a race is a race and that's true and all very well to a certain extent but as a GP racer I'm training hard all winter to build up endurance, riding all through January and February doing my 30 minute motos to prepare for them and then I could go to the first British championship round have a

bad start and get beaten by some rider who can hold on for 20 minutes. What is there to enjoy about that? I just feel that with all the hard work you should put into racing motocross you should have the opportunity for it to show and with 20 minute motos I don't think that's the case.

"People seem to forget I'm as much of a fan as I am a racer. I've got all the videos from yesteryear and I just personally believe motocross should be 30 minute motos, I mean they used to be 45 minutes back in the '80s.

"The sport has evolved like everything but it's exciting enough, 20 minute motos are no more exciting than a 30 minute moto, in fact I think they're less exciting. Races I've watched when I've been injured get really exciting in those last 10 minutes when fitness and concentration levels come into it – or someone has come through the pack. You'll get a guy who maybe isn't as fit and has got a good start but then they start to feel it and get a bit ragged and someone catches them – that's exciting! Most motocross riders these days can almost ride flat out for 20 minutes – it's those last 10 that make the difference. Motocross is test of stamina as much as it skill."



VICKI JEFFREYS

PUTOLINE DB RACING HONDA TEAM MANAGER

"The three moto format puts a lot of pressure on teams. We're fortunate in that we only do MX2 so we do have a break but even so I'd still prefer to see two 30 minute motos. I think that most riders can hang it out for 20 minutes and so you're not really separating those riders who work harder. Motocross is about stamina and strength – or at least it used to be. If a rider gets a bad start or goes down in the first corner then they're not really getting a chance to work back to the front. Before you know it you're 15 minutes in and struggling to even get into the top 10. When it's a 30 minute moto it gives a chance for the fitter riders to show their strength and I think that's important.

"I also think the series could do a little more with marketing. Maybe going years back the riders drew more of a crowd but now there are so many things for people to do with their weekend. That's why I think more promotion to the general public in the surrounding area leading up to the events will help. Motocross is a much better sport to watch when you are there rather than on TV so we have to try and get more people to the events.

"For the TV coverage people would be interested to see behind the scenes more – be able to see what goes into building a bike, how the teams prepare and what the riders do with their training. It would help to get them to know the riders and teams more and bring more personality to it. It's good that there is TV coverage and it has improved but I think focusing on the whole lifestyle of the sport would help.

"I'd like to see the price lowered for people to get in. I was listening to something on the radio the other day about football and how a few clubs have lowered their ticket prices and offered fans a free programme and pie. I think if something as popular as football is looking at ways to bring the fans back then the British motocross championship definitely should. If we can get more people through the gate and more interest then surely it's going to help. If it was just a little bit cheaper you'd have more people there but as a

promoter probably still make the same amount of money.

"In my opinion they should have more rounds of the championship – maybe 12. With the GP calendar like it is I don't think that's feasible if they want the top British riders turning up. I don't take too much notice of the support races because I'm usually back at the truck making sure everything is going okay but I think maybe it would be better to not have them at all. That way there would be more time for the public to look around and take it all in.

"We have a good relationship with the ACU on the whole. I can go and have a conversation with them and they're very helpful. I do enjoy working with them and there are a lot of things they do well. They don't change the rules around and you know where you stand with them. Their time keeping is also very good.

"The manufactures do seem to still see the Maxxis as the premier championship to win but they do also like the Red Bull Pro Nationals because they are doing a good job with promotion and making it more of an event. They're getting good coverage and when families go they are well entertained. I think it's smart that they are running later in the year when the weather is better. There are good things about both series and it's good that they are both there really.

"We're not a GP team so for us to be high profile we have to race as many races as we can. It's not been easy over the past few years to attract financial sponsors but we have to be racing all the major UK championships to get them and keep our riders happy. We'll be racing the three major championships for 2014.

"We've all got a different point of view on what a series should be. I think having a committee or group of people that represent the riders and teams for all the championships would help rather than going to the organisers as an individual rider or team. I think it would be easier to communicate if we went to them as one voice."



The mixed-capacity races are gone for 2014

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Roger Magee has plenty to say about the current series format



ROGER MAGEE

HM PLANT KTM UK TEAM MANAGER

"I think the majority of the issues stem from when the ACU decided to have an unelected team representative in the form of Steve Dixon. Unfortunately he and the ACU didn't consult any of the teams before deciding on the three 20 minute motos. He also agreed to do away with the travel money for the teams if you were first, second or third in the championship. The last time we received that was 2009 and it certainly helped with Stephen Sword leading the championship.

"Steve Dixon is no longer the representative and they still haven't come up with an alternative. More importantly the teams aren't being consulted at all as to what they'd like to see. Obviously we can't all get what we want but it would be nice to be able to discuss it in detail.

"I think the general consensus of opinion is that three 20 minute motos don't necessarily make for better racing. Secondly the overall day is too long. Certainly as a team with a rider in each of the MX1 and MX2 classes you don't have the time to sit down and discuss things with the riders – as soon as one is in the other one is out. There's no real time to sit down with sponsors either it's just all so rushed and for me another reason why two 30 minute motos would be so much better. There would be more time for everyone including the general public to have a good look around the paddock.

"By the time the ACU come to us the decisions are already taken and it's 'this is what we want to do' and there's no consultation process. Another bone of contention is Superpole – there's no reason for it in my opinion and the only thing it really does is add more time to an already packed out schedule.

"I feel communication could be so much better – particularly with the GP teams. I know they have to consider everyone but surely you don't want to start losing your top British riders from the series. It's great that they have introduced a round in Scotland because we have Shaun Simpson on the team but the downside is the following weekend we have to be in the Ukraine which is only something like 2,300 miles away! So logistically for us we either don't take the big team truck which adds appeal and makes the Maxxis more professional or we do and don't take it to the GP – but for a GP that's not really the sensible thing to do.

"If there was a little more thought into the dates and the venues for those dates it would certainly make life a little easier for the teams doing GPs. Maybe we don't

even have to have eight rounds? I believe it's the GP riders that the British motocross public come to see. Surely we all want to see our best talent fighting it out to be British champion but the best riders also want and need to be racing the world championship.

"I think the championship has also gone a bit stale. If you've been to the British championship regularly over the past three years or so it's the same format with the same banners in the same places. They need to do more to make it more of an event I think and they need to do more to promote locally to non motocross people. They can't just keep relying on the heritage of the series – we need new audiences!

"I appreciate it's difficult and admittedly they've made a start but it would be nice to go to some other and better tracks. Milton Maisor is not a British championship standard track and thankfully it's not on the calendar for 2014.

"I think they should look at Youthstream's model for the TV coverage too. They go more behind the scenes and profile teams and riders and I think that would make for a much better show than what we currently have. It's better for all the riders and their sponsors and I also think it's better for the fans too – it's the behind the scenes stuff they want to see.

"It's getting to the stage that if we don't get some kind of action from the ACU then the teams are going to have to take some action. There's a big void between the teams, riders and the ACU. The frustration is building up because every year it's the same thing, they don't bother to consult with us and then the next thing you know you find out through a press release that they've made changes to the series without running it by the team and the riders that make up the British championship.

"We should all be working together. I think there's some disillusioned people in British MX at the moment. I appreciate that it's got harder in the world financially but look at the amount of teams we've lost from the paddock over the past few years. I don't think that's entirely down to financial reasons. I think there should also be the transparency of the ACU showing the balance sheets to the teams each year. They can see where the money was spent and what the cost are and then we could all sit down and do what's best for everyone and grow the series. When there is actually communication I'm not sure if it's even taken on board. They should ask who's right and who is wrong here."



MATT BAYLISS

MX2 PRIVATEER

"I have to work four days a week so I find it difficult to train but even so I would still prefer to race for 30 minutes. When I was less fit I used to like the 20 minute motos because I could get through them but after I started training because I knew I had to if I wanted to get anywhere in the sport I then realised that 30 minute motos are how it should be – it's fairer on everyone.

"With longer motos it gives you a bit of a chance if you've screwed up the start if you're good enough and fit enough. I'm a privateer but I'd love to be paid to ride and to make it to that level I appreciate that the sport should have a certain standard – I think the longer motos do that. From a fan's perspective though I can see the argument that 20 minutes is better because it's more intense and with the three moto format there are more starts.

"There's a lot of travelling racing the British championship but that's just part of it – you accept that as part of your decision to race against the best in an effort to better yourself. If you don't then just stick to being a regional club rider but if you want to test yourself and improve then you should want to race with the best. It's a British championship so we should visit all parts of the UK, I have no issues with that, it's just finding the money to do it! Luckily I have found good sponsors in whynotcompare.co.uk and Helyar MX. Sometimes it's hard to find the time to prepare with work and everything but it's what we want to do otherwise we wouldn't bother going.

"It's the privateers that really keep the series alive because there aren't actually that many pro racers these days. I wish the ACU would listen more to the riders. You can put your point across and they just seem to shrug it off or that's what it comes across like. We're the ones out there risking injury and putting on the show so I really think they should listen to all the riders more – both privateer and pro. I think having a riders' representative would be a big step forward – someone who can talk to them in their language and get our message across."

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Hakan Carlqvist launches
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Johnny O'Mara leads the
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This corner at Hawkstone Park still gives racers
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Magoo motors into the lead
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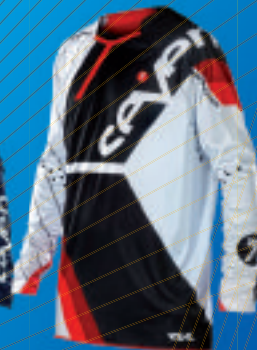
Andre Malherbe on his way to
his third and final 500cc world
championship victory in 1984



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Farleigh Castle 1983: Jaak van Velthoven (46) sneaks past Strickman Spence, 25000 fans transfixed!



25,000 fans watch on as Lawrence Spence pushes home after his KX500's gearbox blows itself to bits at Farleigh Castle in 1983

The majestic Georges Jobe weighs up his competition



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Mark 'Bomber' Barnett at the 1983 Trophée des Nations in Czechoslovakia



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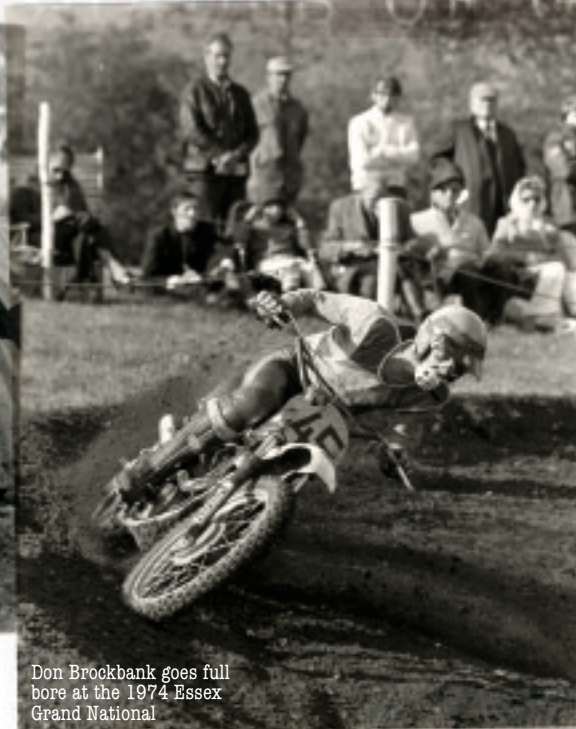




American hero Guy Cooper won more fans throughout his career than he did races but still bagged the 1990 AMA 125cc National crown



Three motocross legends captured in one stunning image - Graham Noyce, Andre Malherbe and the beautiful Namur circuit



Don Brockbank goes full bore at the 1974 Essex Grand National



Brad Lackey leads the 1980 Dutch GP on his Kawasaki



Sutty's hero Pete Mathia on home soil at Hatherston in 1976

Blazusiak blasts to the front ahead of Knighter and US import Cody Webb





ECHO WARRIORS!

THE SUPERENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP KICKS
OFF IN LIVERPOOL'S ECHO ARENA WHERE IT'S
BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR TADDY BLAZUSIAK...

Words by Future 7 Media Photos by Future 7 Media and Ray Archer

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He came, he saw, he conquered – Jamie McCanney gave the home crowd in Liverpool the British victory they hoped to see. But in the Prestige class Taddy Blazusiak proved unstoppable, running away to three wins from three starts. With David Knight chasing him home for second, everyone left round one of the 2014 SuperEnduro World Championship happy.

In the days leading up to the event, anticipation began to rise as a world class list of endurocross riders were confirmed to race. As the defending champion, Taddy Blazusiak was always going to be the rider to beat. But with Knight joined by Jonny Walker, Alfredo Gomez, Joakim Ljunggren, Mathias Bellino and a host of US talent that included Cody Webb and Kyle Redmond many felt he faced his biggest challenge of the year.

However, on a course that proved extremely technical and challenging, Blazusiak left everyone with no doubt as to who the top dog was. With the newly introduced 'Super Pole' used to determine gate pick for the main event it was Blazusiak that ripped his way around the Echo Arena to set the fastest time. Beating Webb by over half a second he set the tone for the rest of the evening.

Opting for the inside gate for Final #1, Blazusiak grabbed the all-important holeshot as he pushed Knight wide. That moved fired Knight up and he chased the KTM rider down on the opening lap. Sizing Blazusiak up as they started lap two, the Manxman momentarily forced his Sherco to the front. But despite the shove, the Polish rider refused to budge and kept control of the lead. Hammering out the final few laps, he claimed the first win of the night as Knight held off a last lap attack from Spaniard Dani Gibert (Husaberg) to take second.

With the start order reversed for Final #2, it was Redmond that snatched the holeshot over Gibert. Swapping positions, the duo played with the race lead as Blazusiak carved his way through the field. Quickly disposing of Redmond, the KTM rider hunted down Gibert and after two attempts finally took control of the lead on the

penultimate lap to win. Surprising everyone with his speed, Gibert followed Blazusiak home for second with Gomez third while Redmond held off Knight to take fourth.

With the chance of a hat-trick on the cards, Blazusiak scored his second holeshot of the night in Final #3. This time he made no mistakes and set off to take his third win on the trot. Behind him, Knight held onto second as Walker gave chase. After suffering a crash filled evening, Walker was determined to end his night on a high and tried hard to find a way around the Sherco rider. But the Manxman had him covered and calmly held on to second to secure the second step of the podium. Despite his seventh position, Gibert's overall tally was enough to earn him the third step of the podium. With Gomez and Webb completing the top five, Walker placed sixth.

Jonny Walker and Kyle Redmond go bar-to-bar out of the water hazard



Tom Sagar's just one of the Brits to make the Final





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Jamie McCanney takes a well deserved win



Knighter's night ends with a trip to the podium

DKOK!

SECOND'S ALRIGHT FOR KNIGHT

Second overall on the night wasn't the result David Knight secretly hoped for at his home round of the series, but it was the strong start to the championship he needed.

With the Echo Arena marking his official debut with Sherco, Knight proved that he's almost up to speed. Looking fast, strong and determined, the only thing that hurt his chances of winning was race fitness. Squaring off against a race sharp Blazusiak, Knight later told that he struggled to find that extra gear in the closing stages of the race.

"Overall I felt good on the track. The bike was working awesome and my riding was good. I just lacked some race miles coming into this one," admitted Knight. "I've been riding endurocross a lot

at home but it's not until you actually race that you realise just how tiring these are. But this was only the first round of the series – I will get better.

Second in Final #1 and Final #3, it was the dreaded #Final 2 that held Knight back from finishing closer to Blazusiak. "I hate Final #2. Why they want to reverse the start for it I do not know. I bust my ass to qualify on the front row and then they turn it around for race two. On a track that's tight and technical it's near impossible to pass a couple of riders let alone the entire field. Fifth was okay but when your racing for a championship it's not very fair. Still, I'm glad to be on the podium. I love racing at home and although I couldn't win it's been a solid start to the series."

HOMERULE!

JAMIE McCANNEY LEADS HOME JUNIORS

In the Junior category, it was Jamie McCanney that ensured a British victory in Liverpool. Making his SuperEnduro debut for Husqvarna, McCanney quickly got up to speed despite his lack of experience at racing indoors.

Second in Final #1, the Manxman went one step better to claim the chequered flag in Final #2. Starting from the second row of the reversed starting grid, the Husqvarna rider quietly worked his way towards the front of the field. Taking advantage of opportunities as and when they arose, McCanney eased his way to a massive 18-second margin of victory and also collected the overall win.

Ending his night as runner-up behind McCanney was the completely unknown Swede Andreas Linusson (KTM). Catching everyone off guard, Linusson took victory in Final #1. Admittedly making his fair share of mistakes, Italy's Giacomo Redondi (KTM) improved on his disastrous Final #1 to place second in Final #2 and bump Pole Pawel Szymkowski (KTM) off the third step of the podium.

Fairing next best of the Brits was Gethin Humphreys (Sherco) in sixth overall. The Welshman almost led Final #1 at one point. Just behind him in seventh, KTM's Brad Freeman had his best result of the evening in Final #1. Surprising everyone with a ride through the pack to grab fourth, he wasn't as lucky in Final #2.

Dropping back to 11th, saw his hopes of a possible podium result fade away. Sneaking inside the top 10 to snatch ninth was Husaberg mounted Gary Daniels. Eighth in Final #1 and ninth in Final #2, Gary – brother to Jane Daniels – certainly impressed on his SuperEnduro debut.



Jane Daniels struggles out of the gate

GIRLPOWER!

IT'S A BRIT 2-3 IN WOMEN'S FINAL

With the men upholding British honour, Emma Bristow (Sherco) and Jane Daniels (Husqvarna) did likewise in the Women's class. Despite having only one final to contest, the Women's race was arguably one of the most exciting.

Featuring it's fair share of carnage it also kept everyone on the edge of their seat as SuperEnduro rookie Emma Bristow (Sherco) tried to reel in and pass Laia Sanz for the win.

With a wealth of trials experience behind her, Bristow excelled on the tight and technical Echo Arena course. After a bad start, the Sherco rider fought her way into second position and quickly closed in on Sanz who was struggling in the rock gardens.

Drawing level in the log piles, Bristow had the crowd on their feet as she tried to take the lead. But catching a log awkwardly with her front wheel resulted in a crash that allowed Sanz to escape for the win. Remounting she eventually finished second.

Behind the battle for the lead, Daniels recovered well from a poor start to finish third. Hitting the starting gate, the Husqvarna rider was almost last off the line and spent the majority of her race fighting through traffic to reach the podium. Finishing fifth, Fionn Griffiths (KTM) was the next best of the Brits.

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BADJOKE?

*WHAT'S BROWN AND STICKY?
A STICK – AND ALSO THE
LIVERPOOL TRACK SURFACE....*

The track in Liverpool was tough to ride. With some pretty hefty obstacles and soft, chewing gum like dirt, for many the track was a little too technical in places. Trying to build a course to test the world's best endurocross riders inside the tight confines of a stadium is never easy but after a few modifications things radically improved.

From the trials like course used in practice, come the main events it was faster and much more flowing. Removing a few obstacles and moving a couple more allowed for more overtaking and better racing.

But it was the dirt itself that got most people talking. Dry mud is next to impossible to find in Britain but the Echo Arena was neither super dry or proper wet – it was sort of doughy. With most riders having never ridden in conditions like that, it took a couple of practice sessions to dial into the terrain.

"It's weird stuff," explained Jonny Walker. "It soft and spongy and sort of saps the power out of the bike a bit. The obstacles are fine and the changes they made worked, it's just a matter of getting used to dirt. But I suppose it's the same for everyone. There's no point complaining – where would you find dry mud in Britain anyway?"



Surprise of the night is Dani Gibert

WHOOOOOO?

*AN INTRODUCTION TO
DANI GIBERT...*

Without doubt, Dani Gibert's third overall was the result that nobody saw coming. Falling well under the pre-race radar, Gibert surprised pretty much everyone inside the Echo Arena to finish third. With many dismissing his Final #2 race win at the final round of the 2013 season in France as a one off, Gibert and his two-year old Husaberg proved in Liverpool that he's for real indoors.

Beating Beta's Cody Webb to win his qualification heat, he held fourth for the majority of Final #1 before passing Webb to take third. But not content with that he hunted down Knight and almost beat him across the line to snatch second. In Final #2 he again got another good start and passed Kyle Redmond to take over the lead. Holding off Blazusiak for a couple of laps, it took the KTM rider until the penultimate lap to finally break free of the Spaniard. Despite slipping back to seventh in Final #3, Gibert did enough to end his night on the podium. Now firmly on everyone's radar, the Spaniard will be one to watch at round two in Poland.



This is gonna sting...

James Dabill fails to make the finals



Danny McCanney makes a last minute switch to KTM



KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY!

THE McCANNEY JUNIOR REIGN CONTINUES

Taking over from his elder brother Danny, Jamie McCanney ensured that the family name remained on the top step of the Junior podium in SuperEnduro. With Danny ending the 2013 season as the Junior World Champion and moving into the Prestige class, Jamie quickly filled his shoes and claimed the overall win.

Although making a last minute decision to race at the Echo Arena it didn't take the younger Manxman long to get up to speed. Ensuring a winning start to his switch to Husqvarna, Jamie placed second overall in Final #1 before comfortably winning Final #2 to earn the top step of the podium. Intended to be a one off outing, it's now very likely that Jamie

will ride the rest of the series.

As the Junior champion, Danny moved up to the Prestige class and acquitted himself admirably despite a week of panicked preparation. Parting company with Gas Gas in the lead up to Liverpool, McCanney got some last minute help from Fowlers Motorcycles who provided him with a KTM 250 EXC-F for the event. Despite racing a two-stroke for the past three years, the Manxman rode well.

Missing out on a direct transfer to the main, McCanney won the LCQ. It seemed the extra track time paid dividends as he posted the sixth fastest time in Super Pole. Ending the race with a 9-11-8 scorecard, McCanney can be happy with his night.

Brad Lackey and the UniTrak KX500 pass Jean-Jacques Bruno (Suzuki) in the 1980 Dutch GP at Valkenswaard. Brad led until his engine seized



GREEN PARTY!

Kawasaki's celebrating 40 years of the mighty KX range and our man Burnicle was there to document the highlights...

Words and photos by **Jack Burnicle**

In a year of anniversaries Kawasaki's KX motocross line celebrated its 40th birthday in 2013. The Kawasaki flagship has been monstrously successful in AMA national championships where the KX500 triumphed in its debut season and also in grands prix and British competition, though it did take 22 years before Stefan Everts claimed its first world title, victorious on the KX250 in 1995.

That original title came in the hands of Californian Brad Lackey. The second ever AMA 500 National championship was an 11 round affair starting in April 1972, wrapped around a 10 week summer break. 'Bad Brad' spent the first half of the season on a CZ, a plastic white dove of peace taped to his handlebars in protest at the Vietnam War. He contested just the races in his native California, winning all four at Sacramento, Saddleback Park, Carlsbad and Tahoe Vista.

Then Kawasaki stepped in with their brand new prototype KX motocrosser and Brad won first time out at Alabama International Speedway on September 2. Further victories at St Petersburg, Orlando, Houston, Carlsbad, Phoenix, Washington and Livermore meant he returned to Saddleback Park for the final round on December 3 already crowned champion. Kawasaki America would go on to enjoy

phenomenal success in the States for the next four decades, though only in the hands of a dozen outstanding riders!

'Jammin' Jimmy Weinert succeeded Lackey winning the 1975 500 crown and the 1976 supercross championship. Then after a gap of eight years, Glasgow born Jeff Ward won every class going through the eighties totalling seven titles from the 1984 125 outdoors to a pair of 500 crowns in 1989 and 1990 before handing the mantle over to the two Mikes – Kiedrowski and LaRocco. Jeff Emig subsequently did the 250 and SX double in 1997 as Ricky Carmichael appeared, winning six AMA titles for Team Green before moving on. Mike Brown, James Stewart, Ivan Tedesco, Ryan Villopoto and another Scotsman, Dean Wilson, have since contributed major championships to the KX portfolio.

Meantime in Europe Kawasaki's fortunes lay for a long time solely in the hands of ebullient Swede Torleif Hansen. The burly blonde made a major impact during the 1974 250 GP season, exploding to victories in Yugoslavia, Sweden and, most spectacularly, Charlton, near Portsmouth, in a rough, dusty British Grand Prix! This outspoken lone warrior went on to claim the 1976 Czech and Polish GPs before, in 1978, finishing second in a season he knew he should have conquered. Convincing wins in Hyvinkaa, Leningrad and

Yugoslavia were offset by heavy falls at Kilmartin, in Scotland and the French round at Ahun.

Still in his 20s the disillusioned Swede retired, but Kawasaki Heavy Industries in Japan already had their eye on a bigger prize and hired from Honda their former American star Brad Lackey to debut the groundbreaking 'UniTrak' monoshock KX500 in 1979. Lackey won at Thouars, in France and finished fourth in the world, just three points behind his Honda replacement Andre Malherbe. Then, in a fiercely contested 1980, this pair took the championship to the wire, Lackey losing a bitter final round in Luxembourg before defecting to Suzuki.

Kawasaki then turned to the UK and an emerging teenager called Dave Thorpe. Missing half the 1981 season with a broken leg, the Berkshireman returned to spearhead Team Green's 500GP efforts until snapped up by Honda for 1983, to be replaced by East Anglians Kurt Nicoll and Jonathan Wright. The latter had already seized Kawasaki's first UK national titles, doing the 125 and 250cc double in 1981. Thorpe succeeded Jonathan as 250 champ in 1982 before Georges Jobe took over on the world stage. Georges sensationally won the opening round of 1984 – his first 500GP! – in Austria and finished runner-up to Malherbe in the

>>



Jeff Ward won one of the hottest ever AMA supercross championships in 1985, two points clear of Broc Glover



Next time he went he was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera.
After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism.
Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

Jack Burnicle is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid.
At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked.

DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

Beaver	Titulaire	★Wife	Femme
Occupation	PROFESSEUR		
Place of birth	BILLINGHAM		
Liens de naissance			
Date of birth	9/13/47		
Date de naissance			
Country of	ENGLAND		
Residence			
Pays de			
Résidence			

Usual signature of bearer

Jack Burnicle

Usual signature of wife

Signature of spouse

(S.37315)

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Torleif Hansen storms to the first GP win for a KX Kawasaki in the 1974 British 250 GP



Thorpe dwarfs the KX420 at Namur in August 1982!



Dave Thorpe romps to his first ever GP moto win on the KX420 at Farleigh Castle

world championship and took the 1986 series to the wire against Honda's heavyweight trio of Thorpe, Malherbe and Eric Geboers. Kurt Nicoll rejoined Kawasaki in 1987 and secured second place in the world championship twice over, though the most famous feat of 1988 was Hakan Carlqvist's beer stop en route to victory at Namur on a private KX500! Back home, Jem Whatley's brilliant 1985 250 national title had been followed by Greg Hanson's 1986 125 flourish, both achieved at the final rounds before Nicoll lifted Kawasaki's first British Open championships in 1988 and 1989.

After a 10 year hiatus in 250GPs, German Roland Diepold won the 1988 Czechoslovakian Grand Prix at Holice and the 1989 round at Metz, in France. And enthusiastic American newcomer 'Bullet' Billy Liles, riding for Italian importer Cinti, won his first GP in San Marino in 1988. Liles, backed by Belgian tobacco giant Johnson, led the 1990 championship on a bike

tuned by scruffy little Belgian wizard Johan Luytens, winning at Valkenswaard and Payerne before unfortunately breaking his leg in Italy.

Lanky Californian Ron Lechien meantime won the 1989 US 500GP at Hollister Hills and Dave Thorpe had been tempted back to Team Green by Alec Wright. 'DT' won 1991 rounds in Germany and Luxembourg (the last 500cc grand prix success for a KX Kawasaki!) but it was his team-mate Paul Malin who challenged for the title after winning the French GP at Castelnau de Levis. Neither, though, could live back home with British Open champ Jem Whatley on his Action Workshop Kawasaki. On the 250 scene beefy Belgian sand specialist Marnicq Bervoets, backed like Liles by Johnson, claimed his first grand prix at Mill, in Holland in 1991 while quiet American Mike Kiedrowski recorded a first KX125 success in the Japanese GP at Suzuka and won there again on a 250 the following year. Then in 1993 Alec Wright turned his back on

500s and focussed factory attention fully on the KX250, Bervoets victorious at Lommel en route to fifth in the table.

This led to the arrival in 1994 of Stefan Everts. The ice-cool Belgian won five 250GPs that year, yet still fell frustratingly short of Suzuki rival Greg Albertyn, while current British MX des Nations manager Neil Prince clinched the 125 national title – a feat that Kawasaki would not repeat for fully 10 years until Stephen Sword's 2004 success in the inaugural MX2 series on a KX250F! But on the Continent, his KX250 tuned by legendary Dutch engineer Jan de Groot, Everts finally broke Kawasaki's duck; five further grand prix wins, including the British round on his favourite circuit at Foxhills, propelled Stefan to a convincing first world 250 title for both himself and Kawasaki!

Meantime, lightning fast 16 year-old Sebastian Tortelli had registered his first 125 GP success in Indonesia and that season's Venezuelan GP was won by Everts' American team-mate Tallon Vohland. Tallon and Frenchmen Fred Bolley, Yves Demaria and Tortelli would all contribute to Kawasaki's 250 grand prix tally during the next two seasons after Everts' departure to Honda. And teenage sensation Tortelli scored a maiden world title for the KX125, ripping to 10 grand prix victories during a stupendous 1996 season. Yes, the record books don't show Nismes, in Belgium, but we who were there to witness the titanic duel between Sebastian and Paul Malin know that they were the top dogs that day, despite dual disqualification over some naff fuel irregularity! And in one of the greatest duels ever – that I was privileged to commentate live on Eurosport – Tortelli toppled Everts at the final 250GP of 1998 in Greece to clinch Kawasaki's second and last 250cc crown...

Since when Continental pickings have been a bit thin – another Frenchman, Mikael Maschio, took de Groot's KX125 to the 2002 world title and his compatriot Christophe Pourcel lifted the MX2 crown in 2006. Scotsman Billy MacKenzie claimed a British MX1 championship the following year, but it is in the States that Ryan Villopoto has kept the KX flag flying high through its 40th year!

MAN IN CHARGE!

DBR SPEAKS EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR MARSHALLING THE RELENTLESS TRAVELLING BEHEMOTH THAT IS THE AMA/FIM SUPERCROSS SERIES...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer

Around stadium offices, through the paddock and stationed on the arena floors Dave Prater stands out at an AMA Supercross race. First of all there is the height, and then the boyish looks but mainly because the Director of Supercross never fails to nod and say hello, even to journalists he sees just twice or three times a year.

Since 2006 Prater has been the overseer of one of the world's biggest motorcycle racing series – a championship that was watched by over 800,000 spectators in seats throughout 2013. That makes his chilled-out demeanour even more remarkable when we ask for 30 minutes of his time to get the inside track on how the AMA/FIM competition is stitched together to cover the USA and even pop over the border into Canada. We covered tracks, safety, domination, Monster Cups, European trips and more with the father of two in our swift chat...

DBR: Dave, how did you get here?

DP: "I came straight out of Florida University where I studied sport administration and went through the promotional body mill from Pace to SFX to Clear Channel to Feld Motorsports. I grew up riding amateur motocross and had a love and passion for the sport. I was Assistant Director from 2001-2005 and then Director since."

DBR: During a five month, 17-round championship you must be fiercely busy. What do you have on your plate exactly as Director of Supercross?

DP: "I oversee the day-to-day operations of the supercross tour. I work with our marketing folks to try and ensure that our partners and sponsors are getting the exposure that they need. I work with our track designers and operators Dirt Wurx. They are a key component because track design is crucial in supercross not only for good racing but also safety. It can be a difficult balance to find. Motorcycle racing is obviously

dangerous but we try to keep it as safe as possible. For the first five or six years I would go from event to event and follow the tour. When I got married that had to settle down a little bit. Now I fly into events and get into the office [Illinois, just outside Chicago] Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday."

DBR: So what kind of staff numbers are we talking about for events?

DP: "We move into a stadium on Tuesday morning and about 30 people are involved in that operation. It grows to about 35 on Wednesday. Thursday we'll get up to about 60 and on Saturday with TV, race officials, track crew and then everybody else it hits around 155."

DBR: It seems that Supercross has endured the financial crisis years quite well. The races we've attended always look busy...

DP: "We are kind of unique. I would not say that we've done better during a recession but it doesn't seem to have hurt us. Our numbers have gone up each year from 2008 when the market crashed. I think people still want entertainment and that entertainment value. They might not be going out and buying a new car or taking a week's vacation but they are paying a little bit of money to come out on a Saturday and get a full day's worth."

DBR: Who runs the championship?

DP: "We're partners. The FIM and AMA are sanctioning bodies and Feld is the promoter. We work really well together and it hasn't always been that way. At the stadium we have a representative from the AMA, one from the FIM and I am here for Feld and the three teams gel nicely. We are always working together."

DBR: Who owns the dirt?

DP: "We do! In every city that we go to. We try to store it on site just to keep down the trucking costs. Like in Phoenix there is a seven mile run to and from

where we store it to the stadium. In Anaheim the dirt is actually out underneath the parking lot and is there all year round in the baseball season and then we come in and take it out to build a supercross track."

DBR: Is it possible to quantify a worth of the series?

DP: "I wouldn't like put to an exact figure on it...but it's worth a lot!"

DBR: I assume there are long-term agreements with the stadiums...

DP: "It varies. For Anaheim we have a long-term deal but for other places it might be year to year. Some are 10, some are three – it depends on the stadium. In Anaheim we are there for six weeks and six shows as we go back-to-back with Monster Jam, so the dirt becomes more cost effective. We just move it around to become either a Monster Jam track or one for supercross. When we can, we keep the dirt in the stadium. For example Monster Jam went to Phoenix right after the supercross this year."

DBR: What about sanctioning of the championship?

DP: "We have an agreement with the FIM and AMA and they are both long-term deals and they flip-flop so we are always covered."

DBR: Can you go further? Reach 20 rounds and tap into more of the east coast? Or are you the limit of your possibilities?

DP: "It is physically possible but in our contract with the AMA there is a set time frame and all Supercross races have to be held in between December 1 and the second week of May. So for anything outside of that then we'd have to re-read the contract. Obviously the AMA also has the outdoor season."

DBR: Okay, so what about going international?

DP: "At the moment our one

>>



*This is the man who
makes the SX series
happen. Say a big
hello to Dave Prater...*



With action like this it's little wonder the AMA series entertains over 800,000 fans a year

international event is Toronto but eventually our plans are to expand back overseas and grow as much as we can. It is too early to say a time frame. When the economy took a financial downturn we decided not to put that stress [travelling abroad] on to our teams. So we are waiting for some signs of recovery so it becomes a win-win for all of us. We did Switzerland one year, then Holland and Seville in Spain and then back to Holland. There was so much mud in Spain! I used to worry about mud races but now when there is a small downpour I think 'this is nothing!'.

DBR: What happens for you after the last round in Vegas?

DP: "We debrief in May about the logistics and tracks and then start working on budgets and any new venues we have. We do pre-trips to those places and scout them out. We do things like looking for new dirt if it is a new location or check on the dirt if we are going back. We examine if it is getting old. For an outdoor stadium we need to switch up the dirt every six or seven years. We go in with a road base, which is like Pea gravel and then every seven years we find that the dirt is contaminated with this road base. It eventually gets rocky and has to be disposed of. All this takes a lot of time.

"Actually the Monster Energy Cup swallows

many hours. I can do 17 supercross races with the same systems but everything is different for that one event and there is so much to do. In general the series runs quite systematically, we just change the city and the stadium, but the Monster Cup is something else. I've started to make the slogan – 'Supercross: There is no off-season!' We don't stop."

DBR: What was your gut feeling about the 2013 championship?

DP: "Overall I thought it was really good. I guess it was about two words – 'Ryan Villopoto'. Every year we come in and the field is so deep and it looks like it is going to be a dog fight but that guy seems to come out on top. Although it is becoming harder and harder for him he continues to step it up. Now with Tomac, Roczen and Wilson he has three more he has to deal with in 2014. Overall it has been great but right now RV still has everybody's number."

DBR: As a promoter did it get to the point where you were almost rooting against a Villopoto victory?

DP: "I would never say I was thinking 'oh no, not RV again' but of course the promoter in me wanted it to stay closer for longer. I think we still have that parity but when it comes down to the wire – even in 2011 when it was so close – he is

able to put that final nail in the coffin and take it home. I know I sound like I did in 2011, '12 and '13 but I think 2014 is going to be amazing."

DBR: Tracks are a polemic subject. Are you constantly in a process of review and analysis?

DP: "Always. We all sit down after Vegas – in that debrief – and meet with the AMA, FIM, Dirt Wurx and talk about what kind of tracks worked, what didn't work and what we might change to make them safer. Obviously we want to keep these guys healthy for the championship battle all year, and we also want to keep the spectacle. You gotta find that balance. The weather is also a factor but it is something you cannot control. It used to drive me crazy when it would start to rain but you have to look at it like it's just another issue that the riders have to deal with. Historically riders like the Millsaps and Windhams have been good in the mud so it adds another element and maybe puts a few more players into the game."

DBR: How was it in terms of the feedback during 2013?

DP: "This year was pretty good insofar as complaints. We worked with Windham and Nick Wey and the week before we built tracks then we'd sit down and go over things with them. I think we came a long way in fixing some of the



things that were being complained about in 2011 and 2012. Honestly it was a pretty enjoyable year and hopefully all the riders reading this will keep 2014 the same way! I can't really think of anything that we obviously need to brush up...and that's good."

DBR: Although Villopoto won the most races and took the title it really feels like Supercross has never been more open. There is a real substance to the start gate...

DP: "I agree. We've never had this kind of parity. At Anaheim 1 we had 10 guys on the line for the 450 Main that were previous winners plus Justin Barcia who had just won the Monster Energy Cup. That has never happened before. I think it is the sport and the variety of riders we have that is drawing the fans. You come to a Supercross now and it is harder to pick out who will win whereas in the past it was always just one or two guys."

DBR: Who are you thinking about more for an event – the TV audience or the people sitting in the stadium?

DP: "I think it is a balance. I don't think you can say one is more important than the other. We try to keep everything as equal as we can. You want to get as many people in the stadium as possible but then you can reach a lot more people via

television. At the same time if you watch a TV show where there isn't anybody in the stands then it doesn't have the same kind of energy. You definitely focus on the live and creating the show in the stadium but you keep aware of both priorities."

DBR: What was the best supercross for you this year?

DP: "Minneapolis – just because of the battle that Dungey and Villopoto had. We had a split lane there that we worked on all day in practice to get it right and that's how Ryan Dungey passed Villopoto. Obviously the Millsaps/Canard fight at Anaheim 1 as well because nobody would have thought of those two for the win."

DBR: Interesting that you just talk about on-track and nothing to do with the event overall...

DP: "Every stadium has its challenges and own crowd. It is hard to separate them. Atlanta is always great – just the energy – and Minneapolis was great because of that race and Dungey being the hometown boy. It was spectacular. The Anaheims are always good. Maybe I have been doing this too long. I'm used to rolling with punches and stuff being done."

DBR: And with that...to New York in 2014...

DP: "We wanted to be in New York, you have to

be in New York and now we're there. I'm excited about it. I've been up to the stadium two or three times and they are great to work with and have been bending over backwards for us. The layout is amazing and speaking of logistics we have a huge parking lot all the way around that place and it is just four miles from Times Square. That race is going to be big."

DBR: The Monster Energy Cup is in its third edition and rounds off the calendar year for Feld and Supercross. How did it spring up from the ashes of the U.S. Open?

DP: "The idea was to do something bigger than ever before and have an all-star event. The 250s and 450s could be mixed in one class and there'd be a different format, shorter races – so that it would be easier to win a main event – and then just some other obstacles thrown at the riders."

"We got Ricky Carmichael and Jeremy McGrath to do the track the first year and said 'hey guys, if you could build a video game supercross track what would it be?' and they came up with something that was unique and had never been seen before. The challenge then – and anyone who has worked in a group will testify – is melding the opinions together. Marrying Ricky and Jeremy's designs was difficult and it turned out to be a decent track >>



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STATS N' FACTS!

2013 AMA SX IN NUMBERS

People who watched: 803,000

One hour broadcasts on CBS channel and audience: 9 and 6.2m

Facebook fans: 1.4m (increase of 12%)

Twitter followers: 88,000 (increase of 90% over 2012)

Mobile app: 1.6 million downloads

Youtube views of official videos: 3.7 million

Official website www.supercrossonline.com: 5.1m unique visitors

Highest attended event: Atlanta, February 23 (68,987)

Lowest attended event: Anaheim 2, January 19 (37,789)

Media value (TV and radio combined): \$11m+



ama sx fan guide

There is no off-season for Dave Prater who is committed to making supercross even better!



but it wasn't really what either of them wanted.

"We went with Ricky's plan last year and he came up with the idea of the amazing split start, the Talladega turn as he called it and then that rolling pit stop that is the Joker Lane. They are items that could affect supercross in the future. The Joker Lane in particular kept everyone guessing because you wouldn't know what the guys' strategy would be. Eli Tomac used it to win a race in 2012. It is exciting and the more we do it the more I look forward to it."

DBR: Can you really pull some of that stuff into the AMA series?

DP: "Well, Supercross has a 39 year history and a lot of tradition so you can't just come in and change everything in one year but maybe things can be evolved over time to make it better and different. There are a lot of people involved also and they need to be taken into consideration for big alterations. The Monster Energy Cup is something that we can have fun with and play around with."

DBR: A shame that none of the Grand Prix motocrossers have participated yet...

DP: "We have interest every year. Every year I get two or three phone calls or emails about top GP guys who are interested in coming over and it just doesn't seem to pan out. I understand because it isn't exactly what they are used to. If it were a little bit more motocross then we'd get a few more. It is not a typical supercross track but it is still supercross and to ride against the guys that do it seventeen times a year is tough. We will still pursue it and we are doing it right now but I don't think it [not having international riders] detracts from the event."

DBR: Could the race be more motocross orientated to attract that wider entry?

DP: "It could, and I think in future years we might do that but it is so difficult in a stadium with a flat floor to build a motocross style track with elevation changes and that sort of thing. The amount of dirt you'd need...it would be tough. It wasn't as supercrossy in the first year compared to 2012 or this time but we didn't get rave

reviews from the riders or the fans so we decided to go back the other way and more towards supercross and it worked. I definitely think it is something still marketable and that's why everything is bigger for the MEC – the purse is bigger, the track is bigger, we go into the stands and out into the parking lot and that makes it special and attracts the people. It hasn't lost any of its appeal as far as I'm concerned and we'll continue to evolve it and come up with different concepts so it doesn't become stale."

DBR: How can the MEC evolve?

DP: "More work on track design I think. It is a bit premature but I went down to see Ricky last week to look at some tracks for ideas and to tackle 2014 while the last event was fresh in our minds. We've thrown around the idea of moving it around – maybe it won't stay in Vegas forever. We are there next year on October 18 but it is not married to that city or stadium. It is just a great fit. It's Vegas – money, fun and a party and this is what we try to do with this thing. Also some different formats maybe."

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER!

*THE 2014 MONSTER ENERGY/AMA SUPERCROSS SERIES IS
ALMOST UPON US — HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT...*

Words and photos by **Steve Cox**

The 2013 Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Series was comprised of 12 consecutive races before there was a single weekend off for the 450cc racers and teams. In 2014, there are 15 races before the first weekend off. Remarkably, in 2013, most of the top racers made it through the series pretty healthy. But the more races there are in a row the less likely this is to happen because without any weekends off even injuries that start off pretty minor never get a chance to heal and can get worse and worse as the racers are forced to race on the weekends and ride/test during the week between rounds. And if the injury is bad enough that the rider can't ride and train during the week in order to tough it out at the races, it doesn't take too long before the racer's skills diminish and fitness diminishes enough that it actually causes them to crash at the races, causing further injury.

There are two other major pieces of news for 2014 are the return of semi-finals and the introduction, for the first time in decades, of a race in New York City.

First, the return of the Semis. Fans have complained for quite a few years about the lack of actual racing at AMA Supercross events, because there have only been eight short races in a night — four heats (two for each class), two LCQs and two main events. A number of years ago, though, the 450cc class used to be comprised of two heats, two semis, an LCQ and then the main event. That makes a return in 2014, although there are twists that should make it even better than it was before.

From now on, the 450cc class will actually kick off the night's racing with the two 450cc heats (top four qualify out of each), followed by 250cc heats (top nine qualify out of each), two 450cc Semis (top five qualify out of each), the 250cc LCQ (top four qualify), the 450cc LCQ (top four qualify), and then the 250cc and 450cc main events. That's the first twist. The second twist is that the non-qualifiers from each 450cc heat are going to be divided by odd and even finishes in their heats, meaning

that the racers who finished fifth, seventh, ninth, etc., in the heats will go to Semi 1 while the racers who finished sixth, eighth, etc., in the heats will go to Semi 2. This creates a completely different field of racing for each Semi, instead of just subtracting four guys from the heat races as it used to be.

And finally, there's the return to New York City: New York City is the largest media market in the entire world and Supercross has been absent from the area for a very long time for multiple reasons: First, the labour unions used to make it financially difficult to pull off a race in the area. And second (and most importantly), there are no covered stadiums in the area and supercross takes place in the winter/early spring. The latter reason is why the weekend off in this schedule happens after week 15 — to give the teams and promoters time to get across the country to New York City late enough in the schedule that there will hopefully not be snow. Afterward, they have to book back across the country to Las Vegas — 2600 miles — with no time to spare. For those wondering, although the stadium is listed as being in East Rutherford, New Jersey, this is the stadium in which the New York Giants and New York Jets play football. Basically, the entire state of New Jersey is a suburb of New York City.

From stadium to stadium, the biggest track-design variable is that baseball stadiums, which comprise much of the beginning of the series, have much fewer 180-degree turns and much more 90-degree turns. This makes passing difficult as the fast line is usually to apex the turns like road racing, unlike football stadiums, where 180-degree turns are the norm and those are much better for making passes under braking, squaring another racer up to pass them on the next.

There hasn't been a lot of moving around of riders from team to team for top riders between the 2013 and 2014 seasons but that doesn't mean that nothing's changed. Following, you'll find a list of the anticipated top teams and riders for 2014...



Ryan Villopoto will be looking for his fourth straight AMA 450SX title in 2014



MONSTER ENERGY KAWASAKI

RYAN VILLOPOTO #1 — 450 | JAKE WEIMER #12 — 450

Ryan Villopoto is in some seriously rarefied air. The redhead is reminiscent of Ricky Carmichael not just in his stature and lack of melanin but in his riding style and his winning ability as well. And just like Ricky Carmichael, Ryan Villopoto hasn't lost a single championship in which he competed since he started training with Aldon Baker.

To date, Villopoto has won eight AMA National Championships — three 250cc outdoor titles, three 450cc supercross titles, and two 450cc outdoor titles. He now has three 450cc SX titles in a row — becoming only the third guy ever to do it (the other two were Ricky Carmichael in 2001-2003 and Jeremy McGrath, who had four in a row from 1993 to 1996 and then three more from 1998 to 2000). Also, his eight

AMA National Championships moves him past Ricky Johnson and Jeff Ward (both with seven) and ties him for second in that category, too, with Jeremy McGrath (seven AMA Supercross titles and one AMA outdoor title).

Villopoto has committed to two more years of racing and all of his contracts end at the end of 2015. At that time, he will have just turned 27 which is the same age Ricky Carmichael was when he retired. However, if Villopoto does hang it up, even if he wins all four available national championships in 2014 and 2015, he'll still be three short of RC's record of 15 AMA National championships.

The thing is that, just like RC, Villopoto doesn't race for fun, and the training with

Baker isn't fun, either. As of now, he honestly doesn't think he'll have anything left in the tank after 2015 although that could change. Baker's training and diet schedules have proven to be too much for quite a few top racers over time, including James Stewart. And now you can add Villopoto's teammate Jake Weimer to that list. Baker is a very effective trainer, but after a couple of years, Weimer was simply beaten down and didn't have much left in the tank when he got to the races. Late in 2013, he switched back to his old training partner Randy Lawrence, who trained RV to all of his 250cc titles, indoors and out, as well as Weimer's 250cc Western Regional SX Championship. When Weimer's having fun he's fast and he's having a lot of fun.



Eli Tomac could surprise a few in his rookie 450 year



Wil Hahn's making his 450 debut in 2014



Zach Bell is a leading contender in the 250 East division

GEICO HONDA

ELI TOMAC #3 — 450 | ZACH OSBORNE #16 — 250
WIL HAHN #23 — 450 | JUSTIN BOGLE #32 — 250
ZACH BELL #71 — 250 | MATT BISCEGLIA #96 — 250

Both of Team Honda's racers are graduates of the GEICO Honda 250cc program and they also both spent time while at GEICO Honda filling in on the factory Honda 450s when Honda had a need. So, when Eli Tomac was looking to move up to the 450cc class some people figured he'd be joining Canard and Barcia in the factory rig. However, with Kevin Windham's sudden retirement early in 2013, the GEICO Honda team had a 450 open up, as well as a considerable amount of budget. Late in the season they even brought Dave Arnold — former Team Honda team manager during the RJ/Stanton/Bayle heyday — on board to bolster their capabilities.

Tomac is staying with GEICO Honda on the 450, running the number 3 by virtue of his 2013 250cc National MX Championship. As amazing as Tomac was on a 250, he has felt that the 450 is more suited to his riding style for a couple of years now. He's going to have a lot of chances to prove that this year.

Joining him on a 450 is 2013 250cc Eastern Regional SX Champion Wil Hahn since Hahn pointed out of the 250cc class indoors. Hahn will likely not be running a lot of factory equipment on his 450 and had entertained the idea that maybe he could move back down to the 250cc class outdoors but that's unlikely for an odd reason: He signed a helmet deal with Shoei. The 450cc riders on the GEICO Honda team aren't subject to team contracts in the same way that the 250cc racers are which is why Kevin Windham always had his own gear deals, goggle deals, helmet deals, etc. But if Hahn wants to race a 250 outdoors he'll have to void his helmet contract and wear a 6D helmet.

As for the 250cc racers, outside of Hahn and Tomac, they're all the same with Justin Bogle, Zach Bell, and Zach Osborne being joined by Matt Bisceglia who made his debut with the team late in the 2013 AMA Nationals.

TROY LEE DESIGNS/ LUCAS OIL HONDA

COLE SEELY #21 — 250
MALCOLM STEWART #34 — 250
JESSY NELSON #50 — 250
SHANE MCELRATH #87 — 250

Similar to the other Honda teams, the TLD/Lucas Oil Honda team will be returning with the same racers from 2013 as Malcolm Stewart will be racing the 250cc class indoors (then switching to a 450cc for outdoors again) and he's joined by team veterans Cole Seely and Jessy Nelson. The only new guy on the team for supercross made his debut during the 2013 AMA Nationals — that's rookie Shane McElrath. McElrath has a lot of speed indoors so he could surprise some people but any winning that Seely does won't be much of a surprise at all. The only guy not returning to the team in 2014 is Christian Craig.



Jessy Nelson lines up for Troy Lee's Honda team

Marv Musquin's a proven winner in the 250 class



Matt Goerke joins Andrew Short at BTO Sports KTM

BTO SPORTS KTM

ANDREW SHORT #29 — 450
MATT GOERKE #44 — 450

After Larry Brooks' team finally folded about midway through the 2013 AMA Supercross season Andrew Short found himself back on a factory KTM although not in the same way he had before. Formerly a member of the Red Bull KTM team it didn't take Short long to adjust to the KTMs and he was knocking on the door to the top five by the end of the series. Outdoors, he got even better, and recently finished third overall at Bercy behind Justin Barcia and Trey Canard despite the fact that he has just turned 31. Short is rejoined on the team by Floridian Matt Goerke. Goerke won the Southwick 450cc National a few years ago and before he got hurt in 2013, he surprised a lot of people by finishing well inside the top 10 a handful of times during the 2013 supercross series. He's got speed.

TOYOTA/JGR YAMAHA

JUSTIN BRAYTON #10 — 450
JOSH GRANT #33 — 450

The Toyota/JGR Yamaha team is returning intact for 2014. Josh Grant's speed was starting to become really impressive again during the 2013 AMA Nationals and both he and Justin Brayton stated that the stock 2014 Yamaha YZ450F was just about as good as their factory race-prepped 2013 versions so that seems promising for them that the starting point is as good as the ending point was before. However, despite the fact that the Showa shock and air forks are en vogue with all of the Japanese factory teams Grant raced the Monster Energy Cup with standard KYB suspension — without identifying graphics. The team said they were just trying the stuff out but it's a safe bet that they'll be running KYB in supercross this year.

RED BULL KTM

RYAN DUNGEY #5 — 450
MARVIN MUSQUIN #25 — 250
KEN ROCZEN #94 — 450

Ryan Dungey re-signed with Red Bull KTM early in the 2013 AMA MX Nationals but rumour has it that he's been upset with the settings he and his team have come up on occasion. But even if Dungey had a huge issue with that (which doesn't seem to be the case except for a few times per year — and every year at the Motocross of Nations), there weren't any other teams with the budget to hire him even if he wanted to race there.

For 2014 Dungey is going to get some help with settings from Ken Roczen who is moving up to the 450cc class alongside Dungey. Roczen has taken Jake Weimer's spot training with Aldon Baker, so he should be in shape for his rookie 450cc season. The only question may be if there's enough fun in the program to keep him from burning out.

And Marvin Musquin gets one more chance at 250cc championships stateside after having won four 250cc Supercross events and two 250cc Nationals in 2013.

ROCKSTAR ENERGY KTM

JASON ANDERSON #17 — 250
DAVI MILLSAPS #18 — 450
JOEY SAVATGY #43 — 250

Due at least in part to lack of budget for the good stuff from the Suzuki squad the Rockstar Energy racing team is switching to KTM for 2014 utilizing the KTM Factory Service Program to purchase factory equipment for the team's racers.

The most notable among these men is Davi Millsaps. Although he was being courted by the TwoTwo Racing squad it seems as if Millsaps is content to stay with his team for 2014 and he's said that the KTM feels a lot like a Suzuki to him — although he did suffer a broken foot early this off-season.

Rejoining the team with Millsaps is Jason Anderson, who showed a whole lot of promise indoors and out in 2013 including a late-season supercross win in Salt Lake City. The factory KTMs should help him reach the next level and he seems capable.

Joining those two is Joey Savatgy, who also turned a few heads in his rookie 2013 season. Savatgy is a guy KTM has been grooming for a while now and they made sure to keep grooming him by assuring him a spot on this team.

Last year's Rockstar team member Ryan Sipes has retired from racing and it's hard to say what 2013 team member Blake Wharton is doing now besides pestering Facebook friends to vote for his band in some online competition called 'DFW's Got Talent' (DFW stands for Dallas/Fort Worth).

MOTOCONCEPTS SUZUKI

KYLE CUNNINGHAM #30 — 250
MIKE ALESSI #800 — 450

The only reason this team is considered a Suzuki team is because Mike Alessi rides a Suzuki and he's really the only reason the team exists at all at this point. However, this year, Alessi will be joined by Kyle Cunningham in the 250cc class only Cunningham will be racing Hondas. Confused? Yep, us too...

Trey Canard could be
a contender in 2014

TEAM HONDA MUSCLE MILK

TREY CANARD #41 — 450

JUSTIN BARCIA #51 — 450

Team Honda Muscle Milk was in a little bit of disarray coming into the 2013 season because of uncertainty at the Team Manager position. It may seem like that's not a big deal but Erik Kehoe had a specific way of doing things that helped Honda's testing regime quite a bit. He reportedly had some contractual issues with Honda late in 2012 and a few months into the 2013 season the team named long time mechanic and technician Dan Betley to the position of Team Manager.

It was a popular choice on the team and Betley — who wrenched Jeff Stanton to six AMA National Championships in the late 1980s and early '90s — has made quite a difference on the team. The racers remain the same for 2014 which is somewhat of a surprise as Honda was trying to keep Justin Brayton for 2013 (to make a three-rider team) but didn't make much of an effort to secure a third rider in 2014. Perhaps that's because the injury issues that had plagued the team for years — forcing racers from the GEICO Honda and Troy Lee Honda teams to fill in temporarily — didn't continue in 2013.

Barcia is hoping to build on his rookie season during which he scored a late-season win in Seattle and if his behaviour at Bercy is any indication he's planning to bring the 'Bam Bam' back this year. But perhaps the biggest deal going into 2014 is Trey Canard. Canard only missed one race in 2013 — Toronto, after suffering a concussion in Indianapolis. That's the first time in Canard's professional career that he hasn't missed a sizeable portion of at least one of the two championships. He reports that he's feeling more confident than ever now and that could be trouble for his competition come Anaheim 1.



Barcia's bringing Bam Bam back!



Martin Davalos has
another shot at glory
with the Pro Circuit team

MONSTER ENERGY/PRO CIRCUIT KAWASAKI

BLAKE BAGGETT #4 — 250 | DEAN WILSON #15 — 250

MARTIN DAVALOS #31 — 250 | JUSTIN HILL #35 — 250

DARRYN DURHAM #45 — 250 | ADAM CIANCARULO #46 — 250

There's no easy way to say this so here it is — the Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki team has never had a season as bad as they did in 2013. The formerly unbeatable squadron of racers managed only one 250cc SX win in 2013 thanks to Dean Wilson at the Eastern Regional series opener in Dallas. The team won one other 250cc Supercross in 2013 but that win came from replacement rider Tyler Bowers at the 250cc East series finale in Vegas. Bowers is returning to defend his AMA Arenacross Championship in 2014 which leaves Baggett (still healing from the right wrist injury he's been struggling with since Anaheim 1 in 2013), Davalos, Justin Hill and Darryn Durham to do the work. Then, there's supercross rookie Adam Cianciarulo who should do well in

supercross even though he's a bit of a question mark having never actually raced a professional supercross before. And finally, there's Dean Wilson. Wilson signed a deal with Jeff Ward Racing to race 450cc SX in 2013 but then that deal fell through as did a couple of attempts that Chad Reed made at hiring the Scotsman for the 450cc class. So, he ended up signing back with Pro Circuit for a fraction of the money to race a 250 indoors and a 450 outdoors. Then he got hurt and missed most of the outdoor season anyway. His stock as a 450cc prospect has dropped significantly now so since he hasn't pointed out of the 250cc class he decided to give it another run at proving himself with a title or two in 2014 before moving up to the 450 class in 2015.



Jeremy Martin teams up with
SX rookie Cooper Webb

MYPLASH/METAL

MULISHA/STAR

RACING YAMAHA

JEREMY MARTIN #19 — 250

COOPER WEBB #37 — 250

Jeremy Martin and Cooper Webb are both Yamaha projects. Both of them raced Yamahas as amateurs and moved into the Star Racing team when they went pro. In his rookie supercross season, Martin landed a couple of top-fives and a podium finish so he should be more of a contender in 2013. But Cooper Webb is the guy carrying the hype as he's always been pretty natural at supercross-style racing. It'll be his rookie season but if the hype is any indication he should turn some heads.

After winning the Monster Energy Cup Officer James Stewart will enter the season on a high



YOSHIMURA SUZUKI JAMES STEWART #7 — 450

The factory Suzuki squad is still comprised of one racer — James Stewart. He's a heck of a racer to have but the rumour was that Suzuki was going to try and add a second rider for 2014. As of today, it hasn't happened but Stewart got his off-season started off right by winning the Monster Energy Cup after a knock-down, drag-out brawl with Ryan Villopoto, so things seem to be looking up. Stewart won the Atlanta supercross in 2013 and is apparently getting more and more comfortable on his factory RM-Z450.

DODGE/SYCUAN CASINO/RCH SUZUKI BROC TICKLE #20 — 450 JOSH HILL #75 — 450

It's always kind of weird when the team owners/managers consistently sign more autographs than their racers do but that's the situation at RCH Suzuki where you have 15-time AMA champ Ricky Carmichael and Pink's husband on the same team! Regardless, Josh Hill is a supercross specialist, and he's been winning a lot of Australian supercrosses. Near the end of the 2013 supercross season Hill was knocking on the door of the top five and he demonstrated his speed last year in Minneapolis — where he has actually won a 450cc main event before — by passing his way through top guys and then holding off Chad Reed and Ryan Villopoto to win his heat race. Hill is joined once again by Broc Tickle who is definitely more of an outdoor specialist.

DISCOUNT TIRE/TWOTWO MOTORSPORTS KAWASAKI CHAD REED #22

For a couple of years now, Chad Reed has been trying to add a second rider to his roster. Now 31 years old (he'll be 32 about halfway through the SX season) he knows he can't carry the load for his whole team by himself forever but he wants his team to continue even after he retires from racing. He made some attempts to hire friend Davi Millsaps this off-season when he got wind that Millsaps was reportedly owed in the ballpark of \$900,000 from 2013 and was considering finding a new ride if he didn't get paid. But as of this going to print Reed's team is still just Chad Reed.

The big change for 2014 comes from Reed switching to Kawasaki. Kawasaki was initially sceptical about giving Reed much support at the factory level because of how Reed's relationship ended with Kawasaki in 2010 — his one year as a factory racer at Monster Energy Kawasaki — and how Reed's relationship ended with Honda this year. Reed made it pretty clear that he wasn't happy with either bike at the end of his tenure with both manufacturers.

Now, he's back to Kawasaki with Pro Circuit support so his 2014 Kawasaki program looks and feels a lot like his 2011 Honda program did — Pro Circuit engine and suspension mods. However, although Reed has been running Showa stuff on his Kawasakis lately at the test tracks, which would indicate he's using Pro Circuit suspension, he has also spent quite a lot of time riding with Ohlins suspension on his KX450F. It's not set in stone just yet.

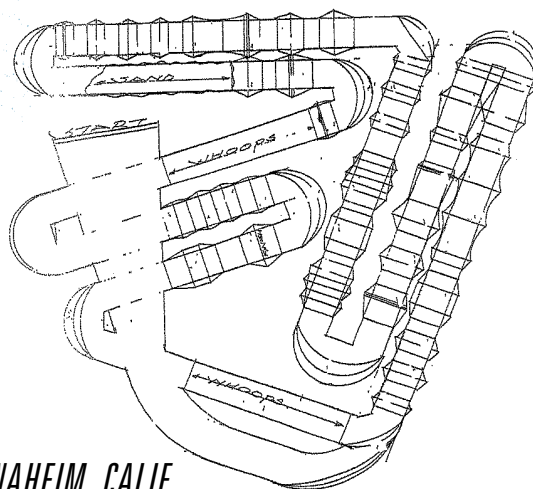


Chad Reed's back on Kawasakis for 2014



2014 AMA SX TRACK GUIDE!

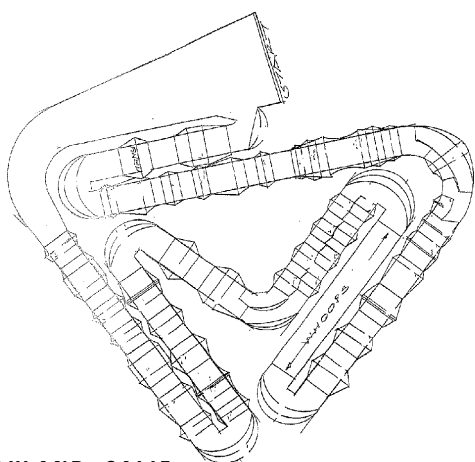
BLUEPRINTS FOR THIS
YEAR'S RACE TRACKS



001 - ANAHEIM, CALIF

JANUARY 4 - ANGEL STADIUM - 250SX WEST

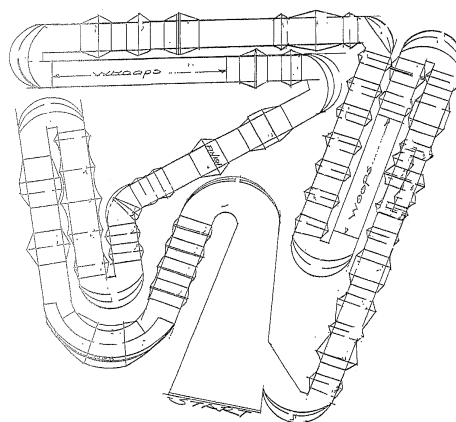
Anaheim 1 is always the biggest race of the year because there's a ton of hype and anticipation heading into round one. Perhaps the genius of this year's track design is that there are still about a half-dozen 180 degree (or very near 180 degree) turns in this baseball stadium. Also, every time the track crosses the start there are no obstacles and that also makes passing better. The dirt normally gets hard-packed during the day and it gets really tricky at night because as the temperature drops, moisture forms on the surface of the dirt, so it becomes hard-packed with a wet, slick layer on top.



004 - OAKLAND, CALIF.

JANUARY 25 - O.CO COLISEUM - 250SX WEST

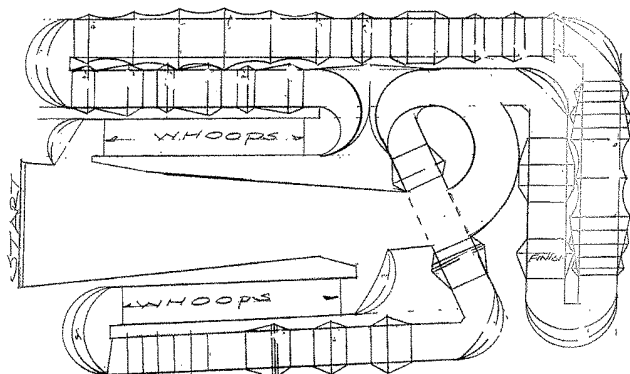
Oakland looks like it has a log of passing opportunities but the old-school design of having the finish-line jump lead into a 180 degree turn onto the start straight always leads to a lot of pass attempts so that will be a place to watch here. This is also the first track of the season to have a whoop section without an obstacle involved, or without a flat area allowing racers to pick up speed before hitting them, so guys who are good in whoops will likely make up a lot of time in this section.



005 - ANAHEIM, CALIF.

FEBRUARY 1 - ANGEL STADIUM - 250SX WEST

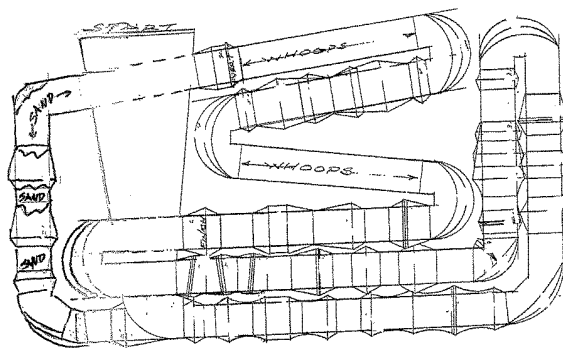
There are five true 180 degree turns at Anaheim 3 but the key to this track is going to be the longest whoop section of the season. The other thing to take note of is that the dirt at Anaheim 3 is usually the hardest of all of them - outside of Las Vegas - because the dirt itself is beat up and baked in the So Cal sun for over a month as it's used every weekend through January for Supercross and Monster Jam. Also, take notice at how short the start is - this will definitely play a factor in the results and maybe even the championships as a whole.



008 - ATLANTA, GA

FEBRUARY 22 - GEORGIA DOME - 250SX EAST

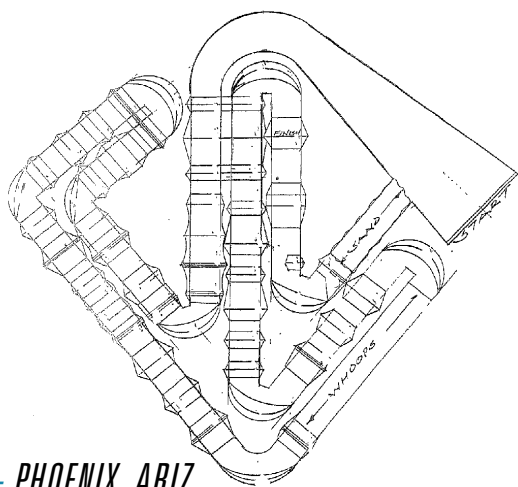
It's easy to see what's different about it - the first turn is 270 degrees! Okay, that's not true but that's what it looks like. After the beginning of that loop, the track continues straight over the berms and into that next rhythm section. Then, every lap after that, the double at the end of the start straight will be in play. The dirt in Atlanta is red Georgia clay and stays tacky except near the entrance tunnel by the starting gate. Wind tends to blow in and dry that area which makes gate choice important because you're going to want to be somewhere to the left of the box.



009 - INDIANAPOLIS, IN

MARCH 1 - LUCAS OIL STADIUM - 250SX EAST

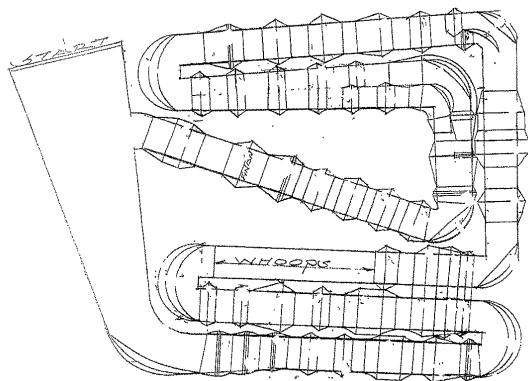
Indianapolis is a popular race among the racers as they tend to love the dirt. The interesting thing on this track is the sand section near the starting line. Whenever sand sections include turns the result is typically the same - one line. The main line gets pushed further out in the turns and it's simply too slow to try and create a new berm on the inside. Also, the second whoop section features a wall at the end of it which will absolutely kill momentum before the racers cross the start straight and hit the sand.



002 - PHOENIX, ARIZ

JANUARY 11 - CHASE FIELD - 250SX WEST

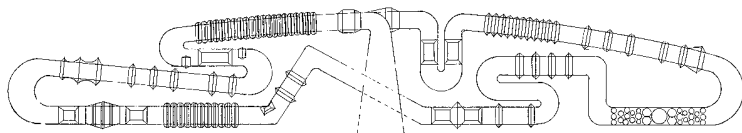
The Phoenix track is more typical of a baseball-stadium track design with only three true 180 degree turns. The dirt in Phoenix is unlike any other and because of that a few guys seem to really fly there: Ryan Dungey and Jake Weimer both come to mind. Also, because the stadium has a retractable roof, moisture tends not to be nearly the same kind of issue as at many other tracks with hard-packed dirt. This year's track design features only one whoop section and there's a jump leading into it, which likely means the whoops are going to be on the small side, and that's normally good for racing as the few guys who really fly in the whoops have a huge advantage the more difficult the whoops are.



006 - SAN DIEGO, CALIF

FEBRUARY 8 - QUALCOMM STADIUM - 250SX WEST

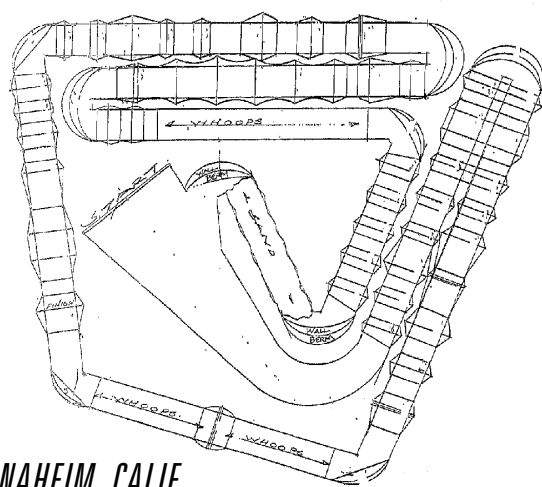
Most of the racers agree that San Diego features the best dirt on the west coast. It tends to hold up very well and gives gobs of traction, but this year's track design throws a wrench into the football stadiums feature more 180 degree turns idea as there are only three in this track design. The one variable that almost always seems to come into play at San Diego is rain - either during the track build, during the day of the race, or during the race itself - so don't be surprised if the track design changes a little bit in order to work better in wetter conditions.



010 - DAYTONA, FLA

MARCH 8 - DAYTONA INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY - 250SX EAST

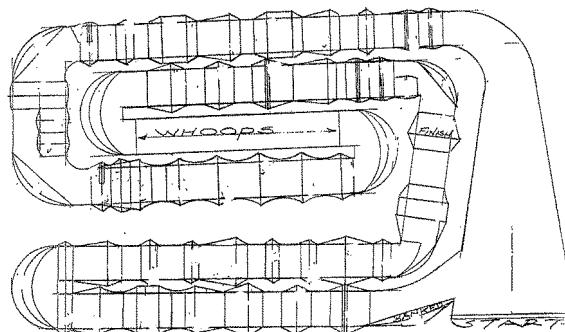
Daytona is the only race on the circuit not promoted by Feld Motorsports and it's held at the beginning of Daytona Bike Week which is huge among all types of motorcyclists. The track itself tends to be very much like outdoors and gets really rough and to complicate things a lot of the dirt is very dark and the lighting isn't great so certain areas of the track are problematic for the racers to be able to see what's coming up in the deep holes and ruts that form. Also, because it's in Florida in the spring there's always a danger of rain which can further complicate things.



003 - ANAHEIM, CALIF

JANUARY 18 - ANGEL STADIUM - 250SX WEST

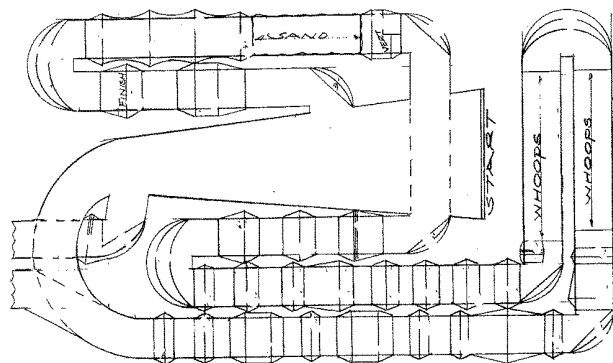
Again fitting the mould for baseball fields, Anaheim 2 features only three 180 degree turns. The berms before and after the sand section should lead to passing as they are wall berms and will definitely be faster if you're by yourself although someone behind you will be able to easily get underneath you and block your exit to solidify a pass. Also, the track's first set of whoops looks like it features a wall in the middle which throws a wrench into that whole section. Also, the outside line headed into those whoops will be preferred even though it's less than a 90-degree turn because the racers will want to be pointed straight ahead by the time they hit the first whoop so apexing the turn will only be good for attempting a pass.



007 - ARLINGTON, TEX

FEBRUARY 15 - COWBOYS STADIUM - 250SX EAST

Although it's listed as being in Arlington, this is the Dallas Supercross. Arlington is a suburb of Dallas and basically 100 per cent of Arlington's economy is based on football and other events inside Cowboys Stadium. This stadium has a roof that's somewhat retractable but even when the roof is opened up it's hard to see the sky past the simply gigantic TV screens that dominate the inside of the place. This event will mark the start of seven-race stretch of the 250cc Eastern Regional SX Championship after six-straight rounds of 250cc West action.



011 - DETROIT, MICH

MARCH 15 - FORD FIELD - 250SX EAST

This year's track design for Detroit is exciting for old-school fans. In the 1980s supercross was held in Pontiac inside their domed stadium and featured a section of track that literally went into the stands and then back down onto the stadium floor. Well, it's back, baby! Check it out at the end of the start straight, where, starting on the second lap of the race all of the racers will head to the stands. Also, the back-to-back whoop sections will be put an emphasis on fitness so expect racers who don't get tired to make up time there late in the main events.



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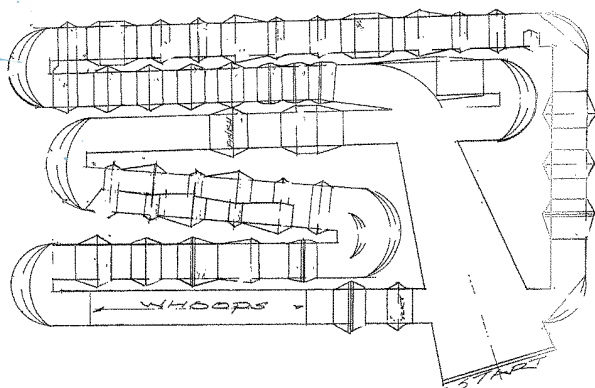
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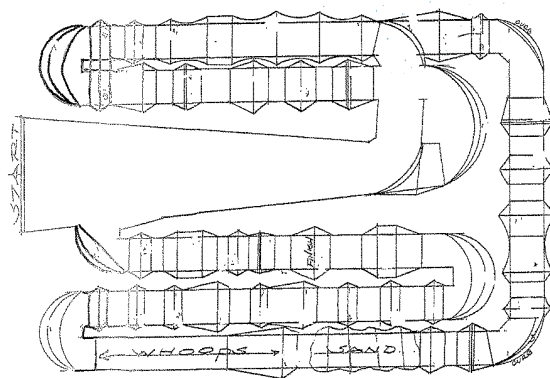
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012 - TORONTO, CANADA

MARCH 22 - ROGERS CENTRE - 250SX EAST

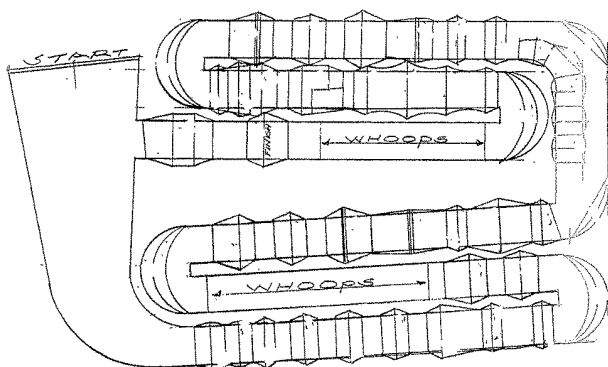
Toronto is unfortunately most well-known among the racers for how bad the dirt usually is but in 2013 the dirt was the best it had ever been and it will likely continue to improve from here on out. However, it should still be on the loose side for supercross dirt. The Toronto stadium floor is immense with tons of room on the floor surrounding the track and that allows the track builder to build bigger, steeper berms at the ends of the straights without fear that the racers will accidentally whiskey-throttle themselves into some unsuspecting fan's lap.



013 - ST. LOUIS, MO

MARCH 29 - EDWARD JONES DOME - 250SX EAST

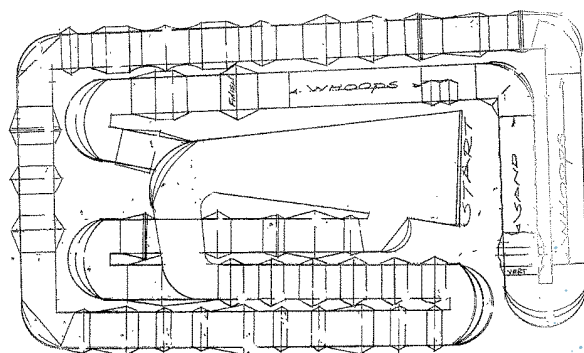
The St. Louis Supercross is normally over a month earlier in the schedule so cold weather blowing onto the track from the stadium tunnel used to be a bigger issue than it likely will this year. More typical of a football-stadium track, all but two of the turns are 180 degrees. Expect a lot of pass attempts at the end of the start straight as it's a perfect opportunity to out-brake someone just before the finish line and steal a spot - or maybe even a win.



014 - HOUSTON, TEXAS

APRIL 5 - RELIANT STADIUM - 250SX WEST

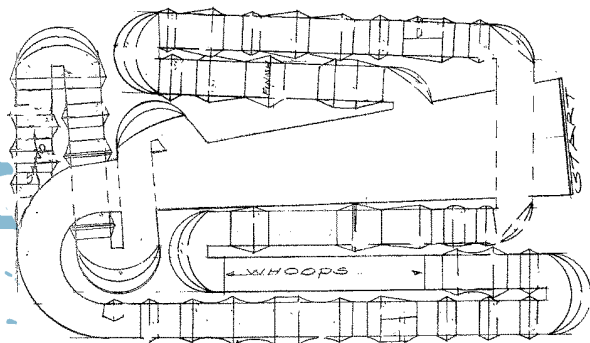
Another typical track for a football stadium, Houston is usually popular for the dirt but the thing to pay attention to inside Reliant Stadium is going to be the whoop section before the finish line. This often results in some mad dashes to the finish. Probably the most famous instance of this was in 1990 when Damon Bradshaw was trying to hold off Jean-Michel Bayle for the win on the final lap of the LA Supercross and he got way out of shape and ended up going off the finish line side-saddle to take the win. It could happen again in Houston.



015 - SEATTLE, WASH

APRIL 12 - CENTURYLINK FIELD - 250SX WEST

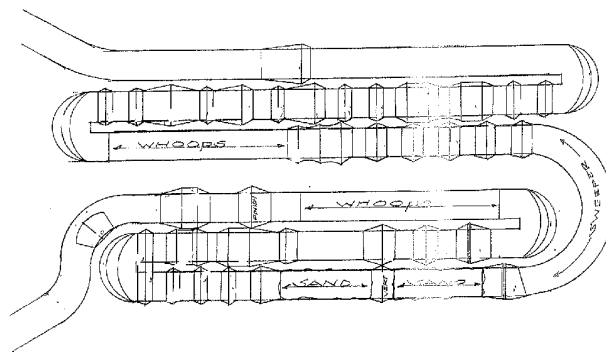
Count on it raining in Seattle. Seattle is known for rain, this stadium is open, and it's held in April. But over the years, Dirt Wurx has done a good job of using a coarse, road-base-type of dirt that tends to hold water really well so the only time there's a true mud race is if it's actually raining during the races. And again, we see a whoop section leading to the finish line, which as mentioned from Houston, can result in some pretty exciting stuff at the end of any given race. After Seattle, the series gets its first weekend off of the year.



016 - EAST RUTHERFORD, NJ

APRIL 26 - METLIFE STADIUM - 250SX EAST

The bulk of the off-week between Seattle and this race in New York City will be spent by the team truck drivers driving from coast to coast. The 250cc East returns to action in MetLife Stadium for the final time before racing dual main events with the 250cc West guys before the East/West Shootout in Vegas. No one knows just yet how the dirt will be, since this hasn't happened in decades, and the turn after the finish line will again be popular for passing. Also, this may be the longest start straight of the year. Given how the series has gone in the past few years, chances are pretty good that the champion will be crowned in New York...



017 - LAS VEGAS, NEV

MAY 3 - SAM BOYD STADIUM - 250SX EAST/WEST

This is a pretty classic layout for the Las Vegas finale with one twist - it's reversed. The huge sweeper that you don't see outside the stadium is normally a left-hander which makes it a lot easier since racers can maintain traction by dragging the rear brake but this year it's a right-hander. Even the sweeper at the opposite end of the stadium is a right-hander. There will be a premium on throttle control here. Because it's sunny and warm in Vegas, the track ends up very, very hard - almost blue-grooved - by the end of the night, making throttle control even more important. Look for a smooth racer like Ryan Dungey to do really well here.

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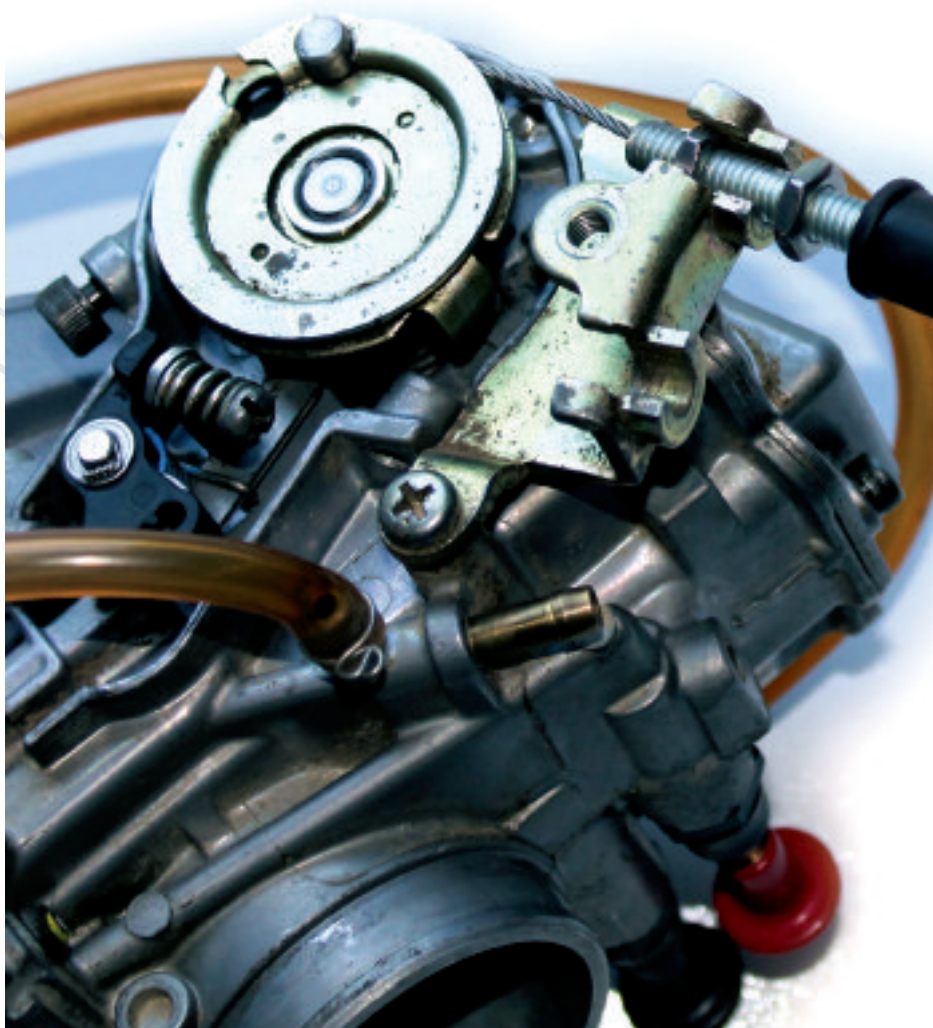
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When four-strokes made a mainstream comeback many questioned why they had two throttle cables. Although referred to as a push-pull throttle cable system neither cable actually pushes – it's simply a twin cable system where one cable pulls the throttle open and the other pulls the throttle closed. Any pushing would just result in the cable lifting out of place.

The twin cable thing is a safety measure to ensure that the off action is not dependant on a spring as the suction from the motor can pull the slide so hard against the carb body it jams open. This could happen on full chat with the inevitable conclusion that the motor revs to destruction – there's also the risk of accidents with an unstoppable bike galloping over the ground whilst you try your hardest to stop it. It sounds funny to imagine three deep grooves on the ground – one from the rear wheel and two outer grooves from your heels – as you attempt to stop the out of control bike in full

panic mode but the reality is unpleasant.

Throttle cables do wear but broken down to cost over service they are inexpensive items. Many must know tales of lost championships from snapped throttle cables but think how they affect your own racing – the throttle is not an on-off switch but a control to vary speed and constantly used as the bike is ridden. Prone to damage by fatigue, dirt and being kinked through ill routing or fouling on other machines they can stretch or snap without warning. The conclusion is always the same though – the throttle stops working.

Routine changing of throttle cables is not high on anyone's maintenance schedule even though it's this lack of maintenance that's responsible for so many untimely or costly failures. Don't be daunted by the process of changing the cables, a good hour and your back on track with only a few tools needed to remove the tank and split the handlebar housing. We only removed the carb to make it easier to see...

CABLEGUY!

**HOW-TO SWAP YOUR THROTTLE
CABLES OVER IN A HURRY...**

Words and photos by ROB BAYMAN



01 Cleanliness is vital so clean the throttle housing parts and the bar end thoroughly.



02 With all the parts cleaned and laid out, it is easy to select the correct part as there is only one correct way to assemble the throttle.



03 Push the cable nipples into their positions after adding a touch of grease, the cables nipples are the only area to add grease.



04 When both cables are in position build up the twist grip body. Building it up off the bars is easiest then you can slide the whole lot into position.



05 Push the assembly all the way on the bars before pulling back about 1mm to allow a little grip clearance before tightening the assembly. The grip should turn freely.



06 Route the cables to the carb and put the nipple for the throttle-off cable (that's the cable that pulls in when the throttle grip is twisted to shut the throttle) in the upper side first.



07 Position the cable adjuster to take out any extreme slack and hold itself in position before adding the throttle-pull cable in the same way.



08 Adjust both cables until there is a slight slackness in the cable by feeling between your index finger and thumb.



09 Tighten up the locknuts and make sure there is minimal free play at the twist grip and the throttle fully opens and closes by the spring alone before re-building the bike.

POSTURE PERFECTION!

WHAT IS THE PERFECT RIDING POSITION AND HOW WILL IT
BENEFIT YOU? READ ON AND GET FASTER...

Words by Ed Bradley

After delivering tips to improve your mental game we're now going to offer up some riding tips so that your riding becomes easier and faster. I believe on basing my training around riding in a very efficient manor that gives you control and balance. The end result is you'll use less energy and feel like you're riding slower than before but your lap times will improve.

Initially I thought it would be great to cover rut riding because it's winter and the tracks are at their softest so there is no doubt that learning to ride ruts would be a benefit. However, before we even get to this area of riding there is something far more important than learning to just blast through a rutted straight.

The area that we are going to cover is the neutral standing position. I quite often speak with riders who say that arm pump and fitness is an issue, then I watch them ride in the most uneconomical position on the bike possible – it's no wonder they're hanging after a few laps!

Spending time getting your bike set up and your posture correct is the first key to making riding your bike easier. There are plenty of reasons why you want to make sure you are stood efficiently when riding your bike – you save energy, have better control of your bike, improve your balance and you'll be able to see further ahead up the track plus it'll even improve your mindset!

Your standing position mostly involves your posture but your cockpit is important too. If you read bike tests you will notice that nearly every test rider comments on the 'cockpit'. This is because it's important to be able to move around on a bike between the two main positions – sitting or standing.

The relationship between the grips and levers, seat height and foot rest height all has an impact on your posture. For example, if your bars are in the furthest forward position then it's likely you'll have to stand upright or lean forward to reach them. This puts more weight on the front end and leaves you with

no arm strength to hold you in that position. Having your bike setup so that it's easy to use an effective stance is important. The most important thing though is your posture so let's get to grips with that.

We will start from the bottom and work our way up to produce an effective stance. Have your toes covering your levers and your legs snug to the bike. It's important to have your toes pointing straight forward so that when you bend your knees you will still be hugging the bike with your legs. The reason why you want to have a good hold of the bike with your legs is because you actually move the bike around and keep your balance with your legs as you keep your upper body central. In fact most of the work is done with your legs and because your thigh muscles are some of the largest in your body they also use the most energy!

Many beginners ride gripping the bike, however, they also ride with their knees in front of their feet/foot rests which in turn throws their hips out of place making their stomach muscles weak and gives them back ache so getting the position of your knees, hips and back is vital!

Have your knees directly above your footrests and keep them there. Now with your back straight tip your pelvis so your bum is sticking out and then squat down into a position that feels comfortable – when you're riding this will generally be with your shoulders directly above your knees. By doing this you will be using your hips and knees to bend and straighten to compensate for the bike moving up and down as you maintain the position of your core centrally above the seat allowing you to balance easily on the bike. Everything hangs off your spine so keeping your back straight allows you to carry the strongest, most effective stance possible.

Here's another thing – imagine being really cheesed off, down in the dumps, lethargic and knackered all at the same time. Now imagine what your posture would be like. The likely stance is head down, shoulders slumped and spine curved outwards. Now what I want you to do is imagine being totally

focused, buzzing and happy all at the same time and again imagine what your posture would be like. The likelihood is that your shoulders are lifted and light, your head is up and your back is straight. What you just did was to create a thought which then produces a posture. The interesting thing is that if you hold the posture with your back bent, shoulders slumped and head down then you are going to produce the feelings that go with the stance! Keeping your back straight and your head up when riding will help you keep an upbeat mindset.

The last part of your stance is from your shoulders to your hands. You can ignore the Americans when they say you have to have your elbows up to get into the attack position because the most important thing is that you have your shoulders, elbows and wrists in line. If you are a little guy there is a tendency to be more central on the bike and your elbows will naturally be higher but if you are big like Ken De Dycker and ride towards the rear of the bike then your elbows will look lower.

To get this right is all about how you hold your grips. A great way to give yourself arm pump is by holding on to the grips with your wrists low and your knuckles high – in this position you're gripping on with your fingers which fires up the muscles in your forearms. Instead, roll your hands round so that your wrists are pointing back up at your body and inline with your elbows and shoulders.

If you do this when it comes to braking you'll just be leaning on the grips with the back of your palms and you can relax your fingers. The rest of the time – if you are holding the rest of your body as described – then you will need very little physical input from your arms. We will cover this more another time.

So there you have the basic stance for a strong, efficient and well balanced riding style. You can now imagine all the different sections of track where you can use this technique and if you do you'll be able to ride faster for longer. Enjoy it!





Good posture

This is a great example of good posture. The rider's feet are snug to the bike, knees are directly above the feet/footrests and bent so that he is stood quite tall, the back is straight and the line through his wrist/elbow/shoulder line is almost perfectly straight. To make this even better the rider would get even

more strength by having his hips twisted further back (when you do this it feels like you are sticking your bum out!) to line up his lower back. This would strengthen his lower core and make riding less tiring! Overall this is a very neutral position that provides great strength, control and balance.

This is what worn
valves look like –
mmm, leaky!

MOTORMANIA!

ROB GETS TO GRIPS WITH THE INNARDS OF THE DBR500F'S ENGINE AND ALL IS NOT WELL INSIDE...

Words and photos by Robin Bayman

With its stock 87mm bore and 84mm stroke, any healthy XT engine should churn over at 8000 rpm while comfortably holding itself together. However, ours is not in the best of health. The model-specific, oversized Yamaha pistons are available in four further .25mm increments, to reach a +1mm piston, raising the capacity from 499.56cc to 511.11cc, on what Yamaha consider its maximum oversize. In the hunt for a little more power, we doubt that 11.5cc will make an arm-wrenching difference or be worth the costs and risk but it seemed to be a 'last chance saloon' with no further overbore available.

As you probably need at least an extra 25cc to feel any definite benefit on an open-classer, we looked for solutions. Many who have jumped a single oversize would argue that the oversizing and extra 3cc were instantly detectable from the riding perspective but may have forgotten that they were comparing reduced performance – from a sloppy piston and rings bouncing about in a worn bore – against corrected clearance

with better sealing rings. There is an alternative though. Whilst Yamaha made other singles – such as the TT600 or TT650 – on 100mm plus bores, the MX specialists overbore the stock XT motor to make a 540cc and fit a readily available Wossner Piston – so that's the direction for us.

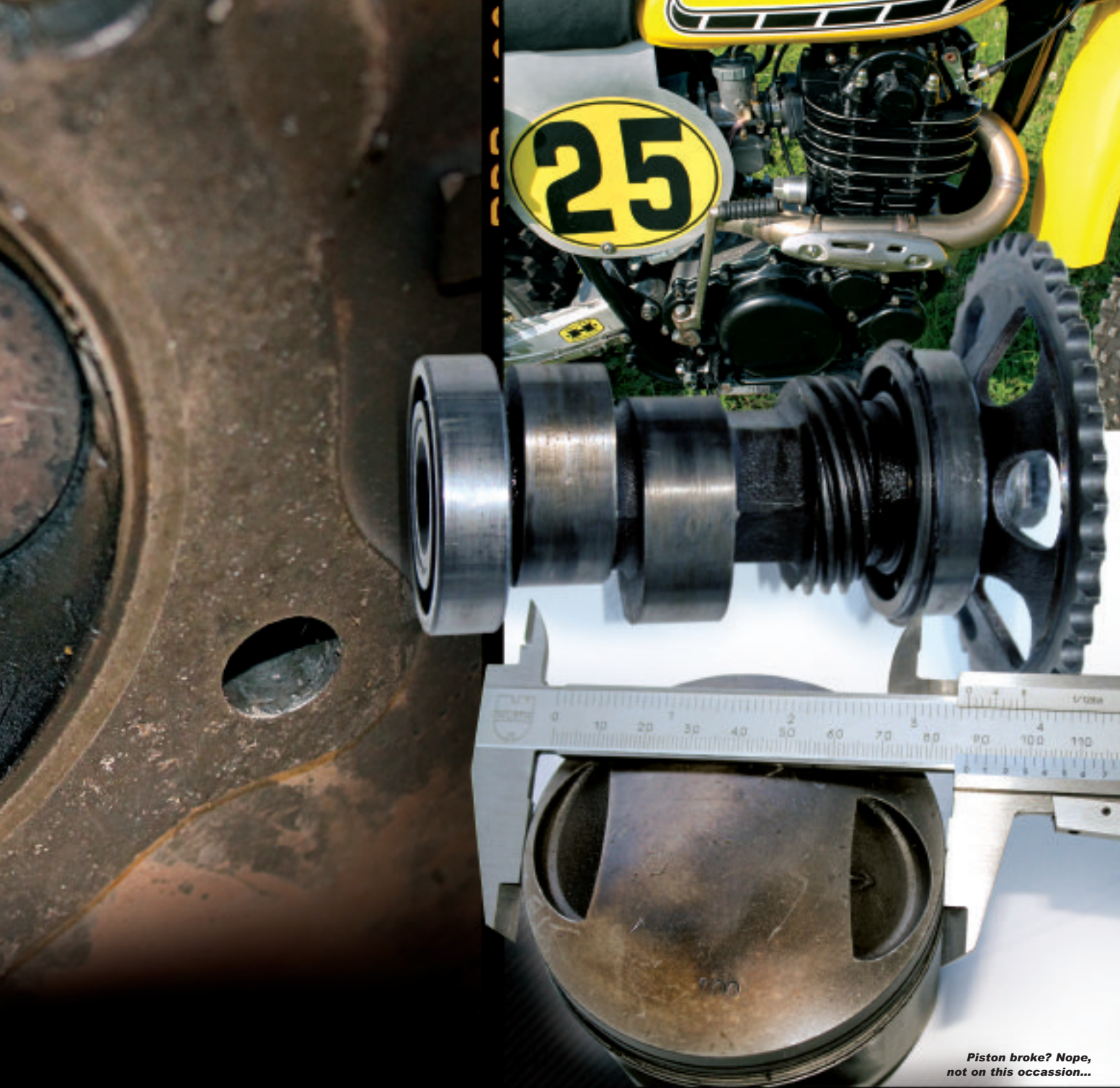
Matching the pipe to cater for any increased gas velocity is not an area we specialise in but as we don't have a pipe yet, that's a bridge to cross later. The only other way to increase the motor capacity is to get a crank with a larger throw to increase the stroke. Is it really worth it? I doubt it, as the DBR500F Mk1 is unique and there's no plan for a Mk2. Why is this important? Stick with me – I will explain!

Capacity is the volume of the cylinder stroke from top to bottom, so there are only two options – a bigger bore or a longer stroke. I will make no attempt to explain the bore or pistons beyond the physical size but the stroke element is interesting. The crank webs – or big heavy circular bits – are weights. They run on the central axis, in bearings. A longer conrod alone will not increase the stroke – it won't increase anything other than the risk of valve

or head collision.

To increase the stroke, take the measurement from the centre of the crank-shaft to the centre of the big-end bearing. In standard XT terms that's 42mm so, as half the action is below the centre line and the other half above, the stroke is 84mm. Only the distance from the centre line to the centre of the big-end can affect that. In short, the big-end needs to be farther away from the centre line of the crank to increase the stroke. It is an option, but, again, is it worth it? We decided it would be a 540cc by increasing the bore 3mm with an oversize piston. Never think the MX1 pro riders are riding mere 450s and we will have more power. Their bikes have been created as thoroughbred, purpose-built race bikes – nothing like our asphalt treading, 'sit up and beg' lame donkey. Eeee-yore!

Our crank has a rather sloppy big-end where it should be an interference fit. In fact, it was so slack it was guaranteed to knock its boll*cks off. More of a knocker than a thumper! This no issue for our guys at PJ Motorcycle Engineers though – they will soon split the crank and throw a bearing in to make it true. I make it a habit to



Piston broke? Nope, not on this occasion...

change the mains whenever I split a crank, as the big-end does not get worn without reason. It is usually due to over-revving, shitty oil or lack of changes that the problem occurs – in our case it probably originated from its constant 70mph as a road bike. With the crank split, the original Yamaha rod can undergo visual inspection and have a new bearing pressed. I have known people replace cranks or big-ends on the grounds of preventative maintenance and never understood why. A crank is either 'gone' or 'not gone' – there is no such condition as 'on its way'.

At the cosmetic end of things. I tried to come up with a random design to be visually striking and retain some cooling. Aberg's own prototype was not stripped of fins but we wanted a bit of visual Viagra for the petrol-heads and have opted for a creative approach. The start was all done by hand – well, it was my hand holding the pencil-grinder – but, as always, the right machinery makes a better job and causes less damage. The fins are brittle and, if done incorrectly or with too much ambition, will chatter and snap off, so we called upon the

experience of the experts. As with many air-cooled four-strokes, the fin pattern continues to cool the head. Let's face it – on a short stroke motor, the head can represent more than half the top-end and is the place where the heat is generated, so again we took the advice of the experts who have completed more than a few de-finning exercises.

The standard head is just a basic two-valve item. I had wondered if something like a later Yamaha head could be grafted on, then remembered the cost of the KX-F head and thought I should return to planet Earth and stick with the stock cylinder-head. Like the other parts of the motor, the valves are – to be polite – 'F' worn (naturally, the 'F' stands for 'fairly'). The old test is a leak-test, where clean solvent sits in the inverted combustion chamber, which holds the liquid for several hours. The DBR head cannot last several seconds and that's why I consider it 'F' worn. The valves could be re-ground but the seats will also be shot, as well as the guides. I would be a relentless trip, as our financial wounds still smart from the last recovery – but what's the point in renovating anything if it's

going to be down on power, burn more oil than petrol and smoke like Puffing Billy?

The standard valve was a 45mm item, whereas the later XT or SL motor ran a larger 47mm valve and has been proven to be the best economical solution to run with a standard cam. Many drag bikes and café racers run different cams matched with exhaust-mounted torque valves in search of ultimate power. Yet for our purposes it all adds unnecessary costs, as the accommodating parts all need to be matched for the clearance of bigger cam lobes. Just factor in the cost for each horse-power gain possible on a variable ratio and then consider the competitive condition of other machines which will race in its class and ask yourself, just where do you stop?

We think a 540cc motor with a compression ratio of 10.5:1, larger valves, a tailored exhaust system all set with an aftermarket ignition should be enough. The ability to put that power to the ground, stop at short distance and turn tightly without head-shake will get our vote over any three or four horse power advantage – and dependability is worth so much more than unusable power.



DE REUVER **REJUVENATED!**

HE'S BEEN ONE OF THE MOST CHARISMATIC AND OUTSPOKEN RACERS IN WORLD MOTOCROSS FOR THE LAST DECADE OR SO BUT IS MARC DE REUVER NOW A DIFFERENT ANIMAL?

Words by Jeff Perrett Photos by Suttty, Ray Archer and Sarah Gutierrez



I've got a lot of time for Marc De Reuver. To be fair, I always did. He's always been entertaining, ever since our first chat – he's always had something to say and never been too shy to say it. Now, approaching 31 years young, he's fighting the inevitable fact that age changes you – not just in appearance but also in your frame of mind. Now he has Jason, his young son, and a happy and content family life, things, naturally, have changed. Let's find out just how much...

DBR: Now you're a father we figured it was a good time to do an interview with you. Plus, you're still very popular in the UK!

MDR: "Unbelievable. I don't know why!"

DBR: I don't either! Now, I seem to remember you saying GPs suck and are a total waste of time but you're back doing some and it looks like you're back having fun.

MDR: "Did I say that? Oh, yeah I did! Yeah, I'm back doing just a few and I'm having fun doing those. I still think, in many ways, they aren't as good as they used to be. I mean, it's mostly the travelling and what you actually get in return but right now I'm happy to do some of the ones close to me and I'm having fun on a bike again. For me, that's the most important thing – maybe because there is not so much pressure now – although I always put pressure on myself. When I was a factory racer doing GPs in 2004, '05, '06 and so on there was always more pressure but I put it on myself.

"I always wanted to be first – in every practice session, in qualifying and in the race – and maybe I tried too hard. I remember the days with Rattray, Sword and Cairoli. If I came into the pits and I saw my name in second on the TV screen that was impossible for me. I'd run back to the bike and go back out to try and be the quickest. It's always been like that – when I was at young, I had to be first at handing in homework, first to be in class, first at everything. It has caused me a lot of pain!"

DBR: I'm sure it has. I've seen some of those crashes where you've been pushing so hard. Do you think people noticed this side of you, then? Because when you're off the bike, you're one of the most approachable, fun-loving people in the paddock.

MDR: "Yeah, they probably don't realise how much I want to win because I don't really show it off the bike but as soon as I swing my leg over the bike I turn into a lunatic! I have so many people, like my dad, tell me to get my head together and I always say 'Yes, okay,' but for some reason it doesn't always seem to go like that. It doesn't go wrong all the time but when it does with me, it goes wrong big time!"

DBR: But you're now in your thirties and have a family so do you think a bit more about the consequences of pushing too hard on the track?

MDR: "Oh, for sure. Like when I go practising and we have those single jumps. Before, I'd just launch them even if an amateur rider was right on my line – it wouldn't matter. I'd just hit them, wide open, alongside him – about 30 centimetres apart – you know? Now I slow down and go the same speed over the jump as the other rider and then hit the throttle when it's safer.

"At the end of the day you learn by yourself and your mistakes – I've made many and they hurt too much. Also, when I crash now I'm not as flexible as I used to be and I don't want that. When I crash now the first thing that I think about is watching out for my kid. That helped me a lot this year – I didn't crash as much as I have before. I've been like a magnet this year and I've soaked up the crashes. Now I have a family so much has changed. For one I appreciate money a little more. If I spent >>



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Despite vowing never to race GPs again Marc found himself in the mix at Matterley



Marc made a return to the Dutch Des Nations team at Teutschenthal

my money now like I used to I'd get a bullet in my head!"

DBR: And yet through bad luck you still got a major injury this year?

MDR: "Yeah, I broke my collarbone and that sucked. I was looking for a clear lap and I was just riding slowly on the outside of the track so I wasn't in anyone's way and nobody could hit me and then one guy made a mistake. He hit me, I crashed and I broke my collarbone. I mean, how unlucky is that? And I had a big hole in my ass too, to go with my other one! Things like that seem to happen to me quite a lot."

DBR: With moments like that – and you say there have been many – have you ever seriously considered hanging up your boots?

MDR: "Many, many times – yes. That one crash when I nearly broke everything in my body, I was thinking, 'Is this worth it?' But then it started again, with the people on the forums saying stuff like, 'Ah, we always knew that De Reuver would come to nothing,' you know? That triggered a gun in my head and voices saying, 'You'll see

– I'll prove to you how good I am,' but that's also a bad habit of mine."

DBR: Yeah, you think? Pride is a strong attribute to have though isn't it?

MDR: "Of course it is, but it depends how you handle it. Too often I have tried too hard to prove a point and tried to go too fast, maybe before I should have. It's like earlier this year – I was riding badly and I made a little bit of a bad decision to race for the KTM team. There were good intentions from everyone but financially it was a struggle. After that, BT Motorsports came in and offered to help so it was better for me to go there. Then I mentioned in the newspaper that I would like to ride the Motocross des Nations and the things that happened then fired me up. Everybody was laughing like it was a big joke, saying stuff like I was too old and too fat and unfit. That really lit a fire and I was really motivated to show I could still perform well on that level."

DBR: And you did – it went well. It seems to me that you are one of those people that need to be

in motocross. You've never struck me as racer that will finish and walk away from the sport. Is that a fair assessment?

MDR: "Yes, I think so. I think if I was going to stop and leave the sport I would've done it by now. I can't stop – it's an addiction. I'm addicted to motocross. I've been racing now for 26 years and I still love it – it's a buzz. Look at the Nations, I'm 30 years old and I went out there and finished ninth in the last moto, ahead of guys like Justin Barcia who makes millions. Okay, he crashed at the start but you know what I mean. I could go and look for a job, working from eight to five, but I don't think I'm ready for that."

DBR: No, I don't think you are either!

MDR: "Yeah, I know. Imagine what I'd be like in an office and stressed because I wanted to be out riding. I need this feeling all the time – it's an addiction."

DBR: Okay, so clearly you're going to keep on keeping on which is great to hear but what about mistakes made – any real regrets?

MDR: "Oh man, I've made so many mistakes >>>



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in my career and done so many stupid things. I'm the perfect example of how not to do it, I think! I've made two and half million in my career and I've only got a Golf."

DBR: What's wrong with a Golf? I had one not long ago that I bought for £400 from a dodgy Romanian guy and it was rock-solid. Well, apart from a few dinks and the fact that the barrel on both locks came out with the key!

MDR: "Okay, mines a bit better than that but you know what I mean. I had everything and made mistakes. I bought the wrong house at the wrong time and lost a lot of money there. I was the king of the discotheque, with my BMW M5 on the dance floor almost. It was always parked right outside."

DBR: Don't you think that's why you're so well liked, though? That's just your personality, isn't it?

MDR: "Maybe, but it's that fight with the devil inside. I know how to do it but also not how to do it. I've had every situation in my career – I've had plenty of opportunities. People like Stefan Everts – he's had injuries too but you never saw his M5 on the dance floor. I have a lot of knowledge now

because of the mistakes I've made, so in that sense you could say they are not regrettable."

DBR: Sounds to me like you'd be the ideal coach to some younger riders. Is that something you could see yourself doing?

MDR: "Yeah, maybe I could be but they don't want to listen, you know? My other problem is that I feel I still have too much to give to my own racing. I can't just stand there and watch somebody else do something when I think or know I could still do it better. I tried it this year but I can't do it. I just can't do it! I say to some young Dutch riders already, 'Hey, don't do this or do that because this will happen,' and they say, 'Nah, it won't, man!' but sure enough it does. I know what's going to happen because I've already been there."

"A perfect example is Jeffrey Herlings. Last year he was much better – he had no crashes on Saturdays. Look at Valkenswaard. He thought he had to win on the Saturday even though he really didn't so he crashed out trying too hard. He's lucky it was nothing and no injury – if that was me I would've been in hospital."

DBR: So you think he has the same attitude as

you when you were younger and he's pushing his luck at times?

MDR: "Yes I think so, like in Lierop. His doctor, the KTM doctor, Everts – everyone was telling him he shouldn't ride but he did. He didn't have to because everyone knows he's the fastest rider in the world on sand. Okay he won, but last year he lapped everyone, this year he didn't – so this is not Jeffrey. He was world champion already and had nothing to prove but he didn't want anyone else to win the Dutch GP. So what happens? He damages his shoulder even more with nerve damage and for what? He then misses the Motocross des Nations and puts himself behind for preparations for next year."

DBR: When you were his age wouldn't you have done the same?

MDR: "Probably, but I was never world champion already with nothing to prove. I did a similar thing in Lierop in 2009 with my back and everything – I was pretty beat up. My doctor told me not to ride but of course I did. I took three injections and didn't feel any pain but the day after I couldn't move and I had caused nerve damage in my back. I then had to stop completely for two months and I still have problems with it today. Now of course, I'd listen to my doctor."

DBR: Do you think that part of the appeal of motocross is how tough it is and when you're younger your heart overrules your head for the challenge?

MDR: "Yeah, it is like that, for sure. My doctor now can't believe how tough it is and how you have to be fit all year. Cyclists or athletes train to peak for one or two major events in a year but, for motocross, you have to be fit virtually all the time. My doctor can't understand how that's possible, especially if you get injuries too, and he's not dumb. It's like a boxer having 25 major fights a year. There's also all the travelling which eventually takes it out of you."

DBR: So, at 30 years old, is that why you are now only doing some GPs?

MDR: "Yeah, the travelling is too much now and I'm not earning enough money to justify it. I also have a family now. The Moto GP boys and Formula 1 travel all around the world but it's a completely different sport in the way they prepare themselves and the budgets they have. I think nowadays it's difficult to race GPs even for a factory team, let alone a smaller team. The privateer days have gone for sure. The >>



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logistics you need now are unbelievable and money is getting harder to find for everyone in motorsport. All this travelling will wear people down if they don't have the budget to plan it well.

"I raced at Glen Helen – it was 11 hours there and that wasn't so bad. I'd woken up at four in the afternoon and it was like I'd gone to a party the night before, so it wasn't that bad. After the race and going on to Brazil was tough though. On the Sunday night, the mechanics have to strip the bikes and load everything. You have to make sure your clothing is washed also. The Formula 1 guys don't have to deal with this sh*t! Then you fly to Brazil in economy class – you have two flights because there are no direct flights – and then you have to drive through the middle of the night for three hours from San Paulo and try to find your hotel in the dark. You feel like sh*t and then realise that there's not even any Wi-Fi. It sucks!"

DBR: You mentioned Glen Helen there. You've openly stated you're not overly keen on Americans and going over there to race. Has your opinion on that changed with age?

MDR: "Yeah, maybe a little. It's mostly the Motocross des Nations thing really. I don't like to say it but you have to have respect for them. Americans are not my favourite type of people but you have to admire the way they come over here, more often than not with all the pressure on them. Everyone wants to beat them and they are always expected to win back home. They turn up in a foreign country and have to adjust to the style of track and learn it really quickly, as well as the way the bikes work, and deal with extra pressure. Then, when we have to go over there, we're going to get slaughtered. They may not have won at Lommel last year but I have huge respect for that. I don't like them but still, I have to say I respect them. Going there to race was never going to be an option for me – I don't like the attitude and I like Europe and home too much."

DBR: Do you think it's that feeling of home that stops Cairoli going? Do you think – or even know if – Jeffrey will go?

MDR: "I don't think Antonio will ever go – not now. He has won many world championships

and he could tie or beat Everts' record, so I think that is a huge motivation for him. He has a lot of respect already from the American riders and media over there. I've spoken with Jeffrey about it and I don't believe he would go there – not in 100 years!"

DBR: Why?

MDR: Because he will get smoked! Why else do you think? I open my eyes in the morning and see a sand track. Over there, he will open his eyes and see a supercross track. They say Youthstream made the ruling on the age limit in MX2 to keep Jeffrey here but he was never going. He's young enough to take the risk and work at it like Ken Roczen but I'm not sure that supercross has the same pull for Jeffrey as it does for Ken."

DBR: Ha, you haven't changed at all – still saying it as you see it!

MDR: "Ah...I'll always do that man. I may be older now and I've learned from my mistakes but I always try to be honest. I think that's the best way to be because otherwise you are only lying to yourself."



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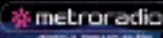
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profile

Conrad charges hard into Matterley Basin's first turn during his European title winning weekend



THE UNKNOWN

SOLD!

DESPITE WINNING EVERY MAJOR TITLE THE 85CC CLASS HAS TO OFFER (AS WELL AS PICKING UP A FACTORY KTM CONTRACT) NOT MUCH IS KNOWN ABOUT TEENAGE SENSATION CONRAD MEWSE - LET'S CHANGE THAT RIGHT HERE AND NOW...

Words and photos by Max Hind



© Sully

ERR!

If you were to ask people to name the year in which Great Britain last won a world motocross championship, you would – more often than not – get a look to suggest you're an idiot together with a reply of something along the lines of 'Jamie Dobb in 2001'.

And, although that may have been the last time a British rider claimed victory in either one of the two main classes in world motocross, there have actually been a few more world motocross titles to come Ol' Blighty's way since then. The most recent world motocross champion to walk among us just happens to be only 14 years old!

Young Conrad Mewse has had a dream season in 2013. The young superstar dominated, winning every major championship in youth motocross. Conrad claimed a hat-trick of success through grasping the 85cc Dutch, European and World championships, and it's almost gone unnoticed! So we think it's about time that we get to know this soon-to-be motocross mega-star as Conrad is moving onto bigger and better things in 2014!

Conrad hasn't achieved this feat alone. He has been coached, trained and guided by long-time mentor, Justin Morris, throughout his career. We interviewed them, to try to gain an insight into one of British motocross' most formidable rider/coach combos...

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DBR: Has it sunk in yet that you're both world and European champion?

CM: "Well, when I came over the finish line it was an amazing feeling – one of the best really. But for the first few days it didn't really sink in. Even now people ask, 'Oh how does it feel to be world champion?' and I am almost like, 'Oh...yeah, I forgot about that!'"

DBR: What do your school friends and class mates think about having a world champion in the class?

CM: "Yeah, my best mates at school support me with it so that's great and all of my teachers are just really proud."

DBR: Has your world championship earned you any female attention?

CM: Erm...No not really, it wa... no not really!"

DBR: Obviously you have to travel a lot, meaning you're away from home and school. Do you have to send in work? How does that work?

CM: "Yeah, school has been really good to me this year. They let me have time off when I want or need it. I just have to do catch up work when I go in, instead of homework. So yeah – that is what works best for me."

DBR: How did you go about celebrating your championship wins?

CM: "Erm... we didn't really!"

DBR: Fair enough! It shows just how dedicated you are! So, what are your plans and goals for the 2014 season?

CM: "I am racing the Dutch, European and world championships again next year but on a 125 and if I could win all three that would just be amazing! And then after that I go straight to the EMX2 championship."

DBR: How are you getting on with the 125 compared to the 85?

CM: "Yeah, it took a bit of getting used to but now I think I'm going okay on it. We've still got a few months left until the first round of the Dutch series, so we'll carry on practising and then we'll just see how it goes!"

DBR: With the 125, obviously it's a bigger bike. Does it feel more powerful? Can you feel the extra weight? Do you feel a lot of difference?

CM: "Everyone says, 'Oh it's easier to ride a 125 compared to an 85 because it's got bigger wheels and that'. Yeah it might be, but you just have to be so much stronger on a 125. To be able to last a 25 minute moto which they are in the Europeans – 25 +2 – you just have to be so strong."

DBR: And in the 125s, who do you think your biggest competition is going to be next year? Is there anybody that you rode against this year that is moving up as well?

CM: "I think Davey Pootjes – that's who I raced against last year – and just those top few guys really."

DBR: On the track, would you say Pootjes is your main rival? Is there anyone you have been racing and battling with all the way through your career?

CM: "Yeah, it's been Davey Pootjes and Bas Vaessen that I have been with all the way through. So I'd say they were my main rivals."

DBR: In the past three or four years we've had a couple of superstars, like Roczen and Herlings, racing and winning GPs at just 15 years old and becoming world champions at a very young age. We know that Justin Morris is helping and guiding your career. Do you have any plans to be racing GPs at a certain age? >>

Mewse was simply unstoppable at Matterley

COACH TRIP!

TOP TRAINER JUSTIN MORRIS ON HIS JOURNEY TO THE TOP WITH CONRAD...

DBR: What makes Conrad so special?

JM: "There are a lot of lads out there, around the world and in the UK, who are very, very talented. But I think what makes the difference with Conrad is that he is an out-and-out racer. To be honest there aren't many kids out there – and obviously there can only be one world champion – who are out-and-out racers. You can teach all the skills to as many different riders as you want but how they deliver it on race day is a totally different thing. Conrad is also very technically precise, so he doesn't make a vast amount of mistakes and with that, together with his determination and the accuracy with which he rides, he's pretty much got the complete package."

DBR: And to be an out and out racer, is that something you're born with? Or is that something that you can be taught?

JM: "You know, I've been teaching him since he was seven years of age and he's got all the skills that any top world grand prix rider has – and probably more! But like I say, to be that ultimate racer, that's down to him personally, I believe. It's something that I believe you are born with. However, it does have to be nurtured in the right way, as well you know. You get a lot of riders out there that have got the speed, they've got loads of talent but, unfortunately, a lot of the time they end up on the floor. And that's where I think my role comes in. We try to calm a situation when needed, we try to boost the energy when needed and hopefully we've got the perfect balance. Winning the world title was an amazing achievement!"

DBR: You mentioned that you first started mentoring Conrad when he was just seven years old. When did you first realize that he was special?

JM: "I've taught over 30 British youth champions now in my 11 years of coaching so I've seen fantastic riders come and go – the likes of Steven Clarke, Ashley Greedy and Connor Walkley. They were all fantastic youth riders and obviously Steven Clarke is still a very talented adult rider. But you know I think what makes Conrad special is that he's like a sponge. You know with most kids, at school or as a parent, you're saying, 'Look, do your homework; do this, do that,' and you're saying it time and time again, but because Conrad has so much passion for the sport, you pretty much only have to say it a couple of times before it becomes a natural progression with his riding."

"Yeah, we have to pick up on a couple of things here and there, don't get me wrong. We are certainly nowhere near world standard in terms of being a world champion at the adult level yet, so we still have a lot of work to do. As he has developed over the years he has become a substantially grounded, gifted rider with all the technical skills, which he has picked up unbelievably quickly and then he puts that into racing. It's that package we've been looking for."

DBR: As well as the training on the bike is you training Conrad on the physical side also?

JM: "There's a bit of a distance between us – about an hour or so. Therefore, he has a fantastic personal trainer called Paul Ryman. Paul Ryman runs his own personal training business. He's very close >>

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Conrad's keen to step up to the 125!

friends with Jenson Button and competes in a lot of triathlons with Jenson. So Paul takes care of all Conrad's physical training. Naturally we do some physical work and training at the races keeping him fresh and ready for the start of the race, whether a little run or something like that. But mainly Paul does his thing and I do my thing. We do have a crossover and for sure I am always on to my boys about eating correctly, training correctly and all the rest of it. You just can't be a great rider without everything else.

"Regarding my position, I'm an ex-rider and I feel that I have grown with the times and that my teaching techniques are very much up to date. Whereas on the physical training side, that was something I did in the 1990s up to 2002 and I think the training techniques have changed significantly since then. Therefore, I'm not on top of that, whereas Paul is very much so. He is an amazing triathlete and there is so much information that he has. He is brilliant at his job and you know I just leave him to take care of that side of things."

DBR: There are certain riders who have done GPs at just 15 or 16 years old. What are your thoughts on that and have you got any sort of career path for Conrad planned between the two of you?

JM: "He's moving to factory KTM now and Stefan Everts is very much the main man there. Conrad and I very much still want to work together and progress through the years. I haven't spoken to Stefan too much about this, but I'm in the mindset of, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it'."

"Conrad and I, we have an amazing relationship, not just as coach and rider but he's almost like a

younger brother or little son – you know? He's almost part of my family. He comes and spends time at the house and stuff. So we have a really close relationship on that side of things and not only do I get the best out of him on the bike, I also believe that when the chips are down we have such a bond between us as friends that I think I can drag him out of pretty much any hole!

"Take Matterley Basin for example – nobody knew it but he was in great pain after the crash he took and he was sick as a dog with flu but we managed to drag him out of that hole and win the European championship. I don't know if that was all me or him or a bit of both. We've got a great little team working and hopefully KTM and Stefan will see that and want us to continue together."

DBR: Factory KTM? Wow! I wasn't aware of that. When did that happen? Is it out in the open yet?

JM: "Yeah, I think it's pretty much out in the open. We signed the contract and we've started working on little bits at a time at the moment. You know it's going to progress more and more. He's team-mates with Jeffrey Herlings, Jordi Tixier and those guys, so it's a full-on deal. To be honest, it started last year (going into 2013). KTM and Conrad were going to do something last year but it didn't appear and obviously he's been on the radar – Stefan has seen him, Harry Everts has seen him. Throughout the European championships and the Dutch championships, being as dominant as he's been, it was always going to be next progression. So he has always been on the 'hit list' as such and with the amazing season he's had at the world finals and Europeans it was just the next step."



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Expect to see a lot more victory whips from Conrad in the coming years

CM: "No. Obviously it would be amazing to win your first GP at 15 years old but I think as long as you're world champion, the matter of what age you are isn't really very important, to be honest. But, yeah, obviously it's amazing for Herlings and Roczen to win their first Grand Prix at 15 years old. It's unbelievable!"

DBR: It must be nearly as good as winning a world championship at 15. You've already done it and you are younger than that!

CM: "Yeah, only just 14. It was a great feeling, so god knows how it must feel to win an actual Grand Prix!"

DBR: Ultimately, where would you like to take your career? Would it be the world and the GPs or America and the AMA championships – have you got any thoughts on that side of things?

CM: "Yeah I would like to go over to America. I'd like to do the AMA nationals. I'm not too keen on the supercross though. But, yeah, I would love to do the outdoors over there."

DBR: Have you got any idols who are riding and

racing on the world or AMA stage at the moment?

CM: "Yes! I have always loved Ken Roczen!"

DBR: Is there a dream team that you would love to ride for? Do you have one in mind?

CM: "I'd love to ride for factory KTM..."

DBR: Do you prefer sand or hard tracks?

CM: "I do prefer sand. I don't know why because I've been brought up on hardpack but I do love sand."

DBR: Now you've ridden and raced a lot of tracks around the world, have you got any favourite tracks, A: in the UK and B: elsewhere in the world?

CM: "Yeah I do love Matterley Basin – that's an amazing track. And Jinin, in the Czech Republic where the world finals were held – that was a great track as well."

DBR: So now, at a very young age, you're starting to grow a pretty big fan-base around the UK. Do you have any plans to race any UK

meetings – such as the Red Bulls – just as a one-off to give your fans something other than the GPs?

CM: "Yeah, I suppose if we get a spare weekend, which is going to be very rare next year, because it's all kind of manic! But yeah if we got a spare weekend I'd love to do a Red Bull and see all my friends from back then, when I raced that series."

DBR: If you had one tip for up and coming young riders, what would it be?

CM: "Phew – I dunno. I guess you've just got to stay focused and do what you've got to do to be the best."

DBR: Last question! The jumps at Matterley were huge! As a 14 year-old, how on earth do you start and find the bottle to do jumps like that at your age?

CM: "I don't really know to be honest! When you come over them it does feel scary. As you come up to it you kind of hesitate but then you think, 'No! I've gotta do it!' I like to be the first one to do stuff really!"

To Hell AND BACK!

IT'S BEEN A TOUGH OLD 12 MONTHS FOR FACTORY KTM STAR JONNY WALKER BUT HE'S NOW MAKING A MARVELLOUS RECOVERY...

Words and Photos by Future 7 Media

Motorsport can be a cruel at times. One minute you're on top of the world and the next you've hit rock bottom. It's something so many professional athletes experience and something Britain's own Jonny Walker's knows all too well.

During the last 18 months Walker, without wanting to sound overly dramatic has been to hell and back – suffering from Glandular Fever. Thankfully, following injury as well as his illness, he's finally healthy and his racing back on track.

After winning Erzberg in 2012 and landing his first professional contract with KTM soon after he then hit a downward spiral. A dislocated shoulder was quickly followed by a severe case of Glandular Fever – both anything but what he needed so early on in his 'factory' career...

DBR: Erzberg 2012 was when you first appeared on the Hard Enduro radar. It remains the biggest win of your career to date. Does it still seem surreal to have won that race?

JW: "It's crazy to have my name on the winner's list at Erzberg – I don't think another victory there would ever mean as much to me again. It was the best feeling ever. It opened so many doors for me winning that race. It was the first year Taddy Blazusiak couldn't race due to his Endurocross commitments. They drafted David Knight in to replace him but then he crashed out and that only left me. It was a pretty special thing to step up and win that race for KTM – it's their biggest race of the year."

DBR: A couple of days later you visited the KTM headquarters in Mattighofen and signed a contract. What did it mean to become a professional athlete and leave window fitting behind?

JW: "It was the Monday morning after Erzberg that I signed my first professional contract with KTM. Up until then I'd had a lot of help from them but wasn't actually a factory-backed rider. I was getting bonuses but still had to work a regular job to earn a living. Signing that contract was a dream come true. It meant I could focus solely on my racing and I was fired up to really push what I was capable of."

DBR: Finishing second at Romaniacs on your first attempt, everything was going great but then you had a shoulder operation. Did that knock the wind from your sails a bit?

JW: "My shoulder had been a bit iffy for over a year and when I crashed on day three at the Romaniacs it popped out. Up until then I had been putting off the operation to fix it but decided after that race to get it done. Looking at the calendar I knew there was enough time to go under the knife, heal up and still be ready for the Red Bull Sea to Sky in Turkey. Red Bull helped with the operations. They got me specialist treatment and everything was going according to schedule. But then I got glandular fever and it just turned all those plans upside down."

DBR: When did you find out you were sick with Glandular Fever?

JW: "I woke up one morning and my throat was killing me. I went to the doctor – he dismissed it as nothing major and told me to come >>



profile



What is Glandular Fever?

KNOW JW'S ENEMY...

Glandular Fever is a viral infection that normally affects young adults between the ages of 15 and 24. Most cases are caused by the Epstein-Barr virus. EBV usually occurs during childhood but if a patient only becomes infected during later life it transforms into glandular fever. Swollen glands, high temperatures and extreme tiredness are easily recognisable symptoms but can often be passed off as the common cold and flu.

"There is no cure for glandular fever. Most cases pass within one month without treatment though the symptoms of fatigue can last longer. Normally it resolves after three months, although one in 10 may suffer for six months or more. Britain's #1 women's tennis player Heather Watson was the most recent high profile athlete to be diagnosed with Glandular Fever in April. She's still yet to make a full recovery.





Jonny tries to sprint clear of David Knight at a round of the British Extreme Enduro Championship



back in one month if it didn't clear. I was back the following week and ended up in hospital for five days. They put me on a drip because I couldn't swallow anything. All I could do was sleep. The first thing I asked was how long I would be sick but they couldn't answer me. They said there was no set time limit for glandular fever – it could last a week, a year, or might never go away at all.

"Of course I didn't believe them. I thought I was fit and healthy – I'd just won Erzberg – and thought I could easily beat this. Naively, I left hospital and flew straight out to the Red Bull Sea to Sky. Somehow I finished second but it was like I'd never ridden a bike before – it almost wiped me out. Then I began to realise just how sick I was."

DBR: Were you even aware of the kind of illness it was?

JW: "At the time I read up on what Glandular Fever was and found out a professional football player had it. It pretty much ruined him. Up until then I'd never really heard of it before but when I read that I did get worried. I was just at the stage in my career where I was trying to break through. I couldn't really afford to stop completely – I needed to race. Doctors told me to take four months off but when racing is your job that's not really an option."

"In the end I was literally doing no training during the week and then trying to race at the weekend. It wasn't ideal and my results suffered. I wasn't near where I knew I should be. When you feel off pace all the time then it gets frustrating pretty fast. To come off an absolute high of winning Erzberg and hit rock bottom in the space of a couple of months was hard to take."

DBR: How did you try to recover?

JW: "I decided to get away. I just needed to get out of Britain – the weather, racing, everything was shit really and none of it was helping. I flew out to the US for some better weather and switched off. I stayed with Kurt Caselli and Kyle Redmond and watched them ride. I also went for treatment at the Red Bull facility in California. They monitored my bloods, looked at my diet and just basically helped me out. It was a good time away – it cleared my head. I came back feeling a lot better but still wasn't right."

DBR: Ending the SuperEnduro World Championship in third most people assumed you were healthy again but that wasn't the case was it?

JW: "SuperEnduro is a lot different to Hard Enduro and I got good at hiding the fact that I was sick. They are short, sharp blasts and each race is only about 10 minutes long. I felt I could 'control' my illness. Between races I was smashing energy gels and doing everything to keep myself pumped up. But after the race I was wiped out. I'd come home and literally lie on the sofa for about three days trying to recover. By the time the weekend rolled around I was feeling okay but then I'd go riding and just ruin myself again. It was a vicious cycle that was hard to get out of."

DBR: Despite finishing second at Hell's Gate you almost ended it in hospital. Was that a push too far?

JW: "I pushed myself too far at Hells Gate – I thought I was going to die. Towards the end of the race Cody Webb started to catch me and I had to keep fighting right until the end. After nearly eight hours on a bike – in proper snow – that was hard work. I can hardly remember getting to the finish. I remember arriving to the bottom of Hell's Peak but after that is a bit of a blur. When I got home I decided to take some time off and try to figure this thing out."

DBR: Racing can be a cutthroat business, at what point did the Glandular Fever excuse become old?

JW: "In racing people are quick to write you off. They forget to look behind the scenes to see what's going on, at what might be the cause of a lack of form. They only look at what's written on paper – the results. Luckily, those that were close to me knew what was happening and I've have great support from my sponsors, which have stuck with me through it all."

DBR: Erzberg 2013 was a rough one. As the defending champion, missing out the podium must have been a bitter pill to swallow?

JW: "It sucked. I could handle not winning but not making the podium was worse. Erzberg was a pretty low point for me. But looking back now I can see the mistakes I've made. I was way too eager off the start. I should have been more careful in the water and not drowned my bike. My other big mistake was opting to use a motocross tyre. I thought it would work better in the faster sections early on but with the start I got it was of no advantage to me. By the time I reached places like Karl's Diner the grip wasn't there and I really struggled."

DBR: When you missed the podium at the Red Bull Romaniacs did you begin to doubt yourself and what you were doing?

JW: "It did cross my mind. I was starting to feel good again but I just couldn't shake off my bad luck. On day one I ran out of fuel and pushed my bike for nearly one hour. Straight away any chance of winning was lost. But the next day I clawed time back and I managed to win."

"On the final day a podium result was back on the cards. Early on I passed Graham and put about 15 minutes into Andreas Lettenbichler for third. But on the final ravine I missed a waypoint on the GPS and rode into a dead end. I was literally about 50 metres off the main line but had to turn back and find the right route. By the time I did that Letti had caught up and third was lost."

DBR: You spent more time on the bike than off it during the summer. What were you hoping to improve?

JW: "The past summer was like a massive workshop for me. Coming back from Romaniacs I felt like I needed to fix things and get my confidence back on track. I stayed with Paul Edmondson and we analysed my riding – broke it down into what I was doing right and what I was doing wrong. We looked at what I was good at and played to those strengths."

"In the past my speed has been my best asset. But because I wasn't training properly it had dropped off. I'm from a trials background – riding fast doesn't come naturally – so we spent the summer building on that. I rode the BEC and the BSEC and also rode a lot of motocross with Jamie Law. He's very analytical about his riding and could help me to improve mine. By the end of the summer I was beginning to find my stride again."

DBR: Red Bull Sea to Sky was when we finally saw JW22 come back into his own? Was that a win at all cost race for you?

JW: "Going there I had a strong mindset of exactly how I wanted my race to unfold. I knew what I could do and how to do it. My health, fitness and confidence was finally getting back to where it was before I got sick. And after missing out in Erzberg and Romaniacs I was desperate for that podium result. For my own self, I had to win."

DBR: Nobody has ever taken a race to Graham Jarvis. Was it your intention of playing to your strength of speed and making him chase you down?



JW: "That's pretty much exactly what I wanted to do. I didn't want to get involved in a race early on. I've been to that race twice before and I knew my best section of the course was early on. That was where I felt I could make up the most time. When the flagged dropped I immediately hung it out and rode those first few sections at 100 per cent. And it worked."

"Graham had to catch me and that put the pressure on him to do so. I knew the Dark Canyon section was the toughest of the race and would act like a bottleneck – slowing things down. That's where Graham was at his best but thankfully I just had enough left in the tank to lead him across the mountain and over the finish line."

DBR: Your two focuses are Hard Enduro and SuperEnduro in which you face Taddy Blazusiak and Graham Jarvis. Has it been tough to play second fiddle to them?

JW: "In motocross you had eras with Stefan Everts and Ricky Carmichael dominating, Dougie Lampkin and now Toni Bou in trials. It's the same with Taddy and Graham in what we do. They are gifted in their chosen sports but both only focus on either Endurocross or Hard Enduro which makes them tough to beat."

"Sometimes when I finish second I wonder whether if I only rode Hard Enduro could I beat Graham more often but I try not to dwell on it. To be honest I like racing both – it keeps things varied and more enjoyable. I just need to figure out how to beat them both more often."

DBR: You've decided to race the KTM 250 EXC-F for SuperEnduro. Are you happy to ride the four-stroke indoors?

JW: "During the 2013 SuperEnduro season I thought about riding the four-stroke indoors but it wasn't possible to make the switch until the summer. It's been a good move and I feel glad that I've made it. The 250F works better than the KTM 300 EXC indoors – especially when the tracks are hard packed. I can turn it quicker, get the power to the ground easier and it's not as tiring to ride."

DBR: The opening round of the SuperEnduro World Championship in Liverpool was a tough night for you. Did the pressure of a home event affect your performance?

JW: "I never felt that 'home pressure' in Liverpool – the night just didn't go right for me. My starts let me down and I crashed too often. I never started on concrete before – let alone a polished concrete floor – and I was slow out of the gate in Final #1. Boxed in traffic I crashed trying to avoid another rider and ended up in the barrier. It was hard to recover from that but I managed to turn things around in the final race of the night."

DBR: Does finishing third in final race of the night give you confidence for rest of year?

JW: "I think if I'd ended Liverpool without that result in Final #3 it would have been a bit of a kick in the teeth. Sixth overall on the night was far from what I wanted but finishing third in Final #3 is the biggest positive to take away from it. I finally got a decent start and ran up front the whole race. I was matching David's speed and it definitely showed that I haven't lost anything by switching to the four-stroke. I'll be trying hard at the next round in Poland to keep that momentum going."

DBR: Back to 100% health and with renewed contract – is 2014 your time to come good again?

JW: "The last 18 months were the worst of my life and I'm happy to put them behind me. Next year I'm starting afresh. It's not a second chance but more redemption for the bad luck that I've had. I know I belong on the podium and that's where I want to be."





Jonny On...

KURT CASELLI

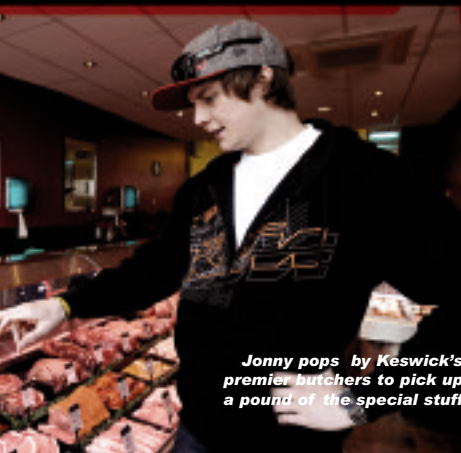
"Kurt was just a cool guy that was awesome at riding bikes. I don't think he realised just how good or influential he was to the sport. I only got to know him during the last 18 months or so but he taught me so much in that short space of time.

"As a rider he was phenomenal but it wasn't until you went riding with him that you realised why. He was a true professional. He put so much effort into everything he did – that's why he was one of the very best. But it's his decency and openness that stands out to me most.

"The first time I stayed with him there were about seven people staying at his house – most of us were riders. Ivan Ramirez was there and at the time he was a rival but that didn't bother Kurt. He never felt the need to hide anything – he was very welcoming and ready to help."

WINDOW FITTING

"Although it was hard to juggle racing and fitting windows I really enjoyed it. It was fun time. Working a regular job gave me a complete break from racing. Of course it was tough to know that your rivals were riding when you were working but in a way it kept me grounded. It brought me back down to reality spending the day grafting and talking about things like football, women or booze. But I've also learned how lucky I am to race professionally and it's an opportunity I don't want to waste."



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DEXTER DOUGLAS!

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Robert Yates on-track antics have attracted big sponsors like Bridgestone

SPOTLIGHT ON... **ROBERT YATES #4**

DOB: 19/11/97 **HOMETOWN:** REDDITCH **SPONSORS:** BRIDGESTONE UK, FILTERTECH, IDS TRANSPORT, ROCKEY'S BUILDING MAINTENANCE, WATSON PLANT HIRE

Logging a string of quality performances at club level over the past few months, Robert Yates is giving full notice he means business in 2014. Racing a 125cc smoker against 250F mounted hombres is never going to be easy and keeping a four year old Suzuki mount going for yet another full season could also prove a tricky option.

Both things considered it all adds massive credit to the Yates account, and the guys at Bridgestone Tyres are also aware of his talent. Spotted last spring by Bridgestone's Training and Development manager Mark Fereday, Robert has been flying the Bridgestone flag ever since. Rage caught up with the pair of them and Mark had this to say about Robert.

"I noticed Rob while I was sitting on the start line waiting for my Vets race at North Nibley earlier this year," says Mark. "He was attacking the track but at the same time looking very smooth and he was beating 250Fs on his 125!

"Knowing that we (Bridgestone) we're looking to get back into the motocross tyre market with the new Bridgestone Battlecross MX range, Rob seemed a perfect choice to start building interest in the brand and at the same time, working with Rob and father Tony to receive some feedback on the performance of our MX range.

"Being a massive worldwide company it was important that we chose the right rider to represent us and Rob along with his family do just that perfectly. We are looking forward to

increasing support for team Yates in 2014 and we are all really excited to follow Rob's progress in the sport."

Rage: You've had a pretty successful youth career so far but just remind me of the major achievements.

RY: "In 2008 I finished as runner-up in the BYMX and won the BSMA finals. 2010 was another good year winning the BSMA finals again on SW 85 and ending up third in the BYMX. Then on Big Wheels in 2012 I was British Youth Nationals runner-up – just missing the win by one point and I finished third at the BSMA finals in 2013 in the Senior section."

Rage: Which championships will you be doing in 2014?

RY: "My main focus will be the GT cup as they offer a dedicated 125 group and I'll also be racing in the new BSMA Bridgestone Clubman championship and Cotswold club series. I just want to enjoy the racing and do the best I can."

Rage: Ever since leaving the 65cc ranks you have ridden Suzuki machines. What is it that you like about the brand?

RY: "All through my time in the 85cc class we rarely had any mechanical problems with the bike and I thought the 85 was very underrated both power and handling wise. The 125 has given a bit more trouble probably because it is

an older bike. At the moment it is hard to keep all of the engine good at the same time and my dad is always on the look out for ways to improve it. If a new RM 125 could be found that would be a big advantage. If any one knows of one please let us know."

Rage: You have a long established connection with the BSMA – what do you particularly like about their set up?

RY: "I just think the BSMA are the best for schoolboy racing with a wide variety of clubs and tracks and to see the Clubman's series coming back in 2014 should be a good boost for the sport."

Rage: Which was your favourite event of last season? And what's been your finest hour at National level?

RY: "Picking just one it would be the ACU team event at Foxhills. It was a strong competition especially from the Cambridge club and the Irish lads made for some good racing too. It was a rain lashed meeting with heavy going but I managed five consistent results riding for the Salop club. We narrowly missed out on the win but we will be back stronger in '14. My best National result has to be getting first overall at Bampton BYMX in 2008."

Rage: Do you think National racing was better when there was less choice?



Can Robbie Scott snatch 65cc glory? Don't bet against it...



GOLDEN TIMES!

GT CUP GEARS UP FOR 2014...

It's usually around late January or early February when thoughts turn to just who might win what as the various National racing lists begin to break cover. This month however it's possible to evaluate early the strength of the 2014 GT Cup as they remarkably announce that their youth classes are full in all but the Auto section by mid October. It's quite a testament to the series growing in strength and popularity but how are things looking for next term?

Starting with the Open 125s watch out for Henry Williams, Rob Yates, Josh Coleman and Oli Benton as they crank up the pressure. This one should be another classic joust as top youth go bar-to-bar with the adults where reigning champ and TM legend Jim Davies will be one of the number.

The Rookie section gets a new name as it becomes Youth Lites and new Dantec Husqvarna UK signing Tony Saunders will really fancy his chances here. Saunders finished third in last season's series but he can expect a full on challenge from last year's 85cc champ Henry Siddiqui as he now moves up. Along with Siddiqui expect fireworks from MJW Kawasaki teamster Will Keogh, plus Kyle Lane, Charlie Putnam, Will Jeonney, Ethan Gatenby and Jake Edey amongst others.

Looking at the Biggies division Dexter Douglas and Tommy Lockhart stand out as strong candidates for gold with Harry Kimber in his first year on BWs a good bet to push them all the way. In the Smallies George Sim Mutch

and Taylor Hampshire represent a green meanie barrier that most will find hard to break down. Having said that watch out for section newbies Tyler Rowe, Reece Martin and Lewis Wood. Also as second year runners both Connor Ford and Charlie Kent will also be expecting to make the Small Wheel podium positions.

Down in the 65s there is perhaps the most intriguing clash as 2013 Auto kingpin Charlie Heyman takes on a gaggle of more experienced Junior heavyweights. Lining up with Heyman will be Louie Kessell, current champ Eddie Jay Wade, Bobby Bruce, Jack Grayshon and a host of other strong runners such as Alfie Card and Robbie Scott. The 65s could well be the series highlighter.

In the Autos as always it's a bit of an unknown quantity as some fledgling runners hit National tracks for the first time – but with Billy Moriarty showing promise at the close of the last campaign he could be the one to beat.

HOT DATES!

2014 GT CUP

March 8/9 – Mildenhall, Suffolk

March 29/30 – Wilden Lane, West Midlands

April 12/13 – TBA

May 3/4 – TBA

May 31/June 1 – Warmingham Lane, Cheshire

July 12/13 – Sherwood, Nottinghamshire

August 2/3 – Culham, Oxfordshire



RY: "I think it was better when events didn't clash as it allowed people to ride in more than one series which meant that there was bigger line ups and better support."

Age: Thanks for that Robert any final shouts?

RY: "Yes I would really like to say to all my sponsors, mum, dad and manager Kathrine Yates plus all at the Cotswold Club that you have all helped me so much over the years so big, big thanks."



Josh Coleman should be one to watch in the 125 class



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Dexter's been in fine form
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SPOTLIGHT ON...

DEXTER DOUGLAS #711

DOB: 31/07/99 HOMETOWN: WHALLEY SPONSORS: RSC EUROPE, SANDIFORD OFFROAD, RFX, PUTOLINE

Looking around for some likely big hitters in next season's BW85 championships we recently asked Dexter Douglas if he had made his championship choices yet. "We are planning on making the British Youth Nationals our main aim and will then ride anywhere else that doesn't clash."

Dexter is also registered for the GT Cup where he would be a strong favourite for the title – but already plans are made difficult as clashes between these two ACU gigs are already pencilled in. Closing down his 2013 season Dexter smashed home four terrific race wins on Barmouth beach and while we had Dexter cornered we asked him about this and a few other things too.

Rage: Hi Dexter, did you consider racing a 125 next season or was it always the plan to go 85cc one more time?

DD: "Yeah my plan has always been to stay on a 85cc for one more year because I've always moved up early."

Rage: In 2013 you raced some of the Dutch ONK series and some European qualifiers. What were your impressions of racing in Europe last term good or bad?

DD: "I really loved it all. The riders are so fast

especially in the European qualifiers and thinking about it the ONK is almost as tough. I managed to qualify for all my races and score some points – it was such a good experience. I can't think of anything I didn't like to be honest."

Rage: With 2014 as your final fling on 85s will you be disappointed if you don't end up on a National podium next year? And what will represent a good return?

DD: "Yeah I think I have a real chance of doing well next year and I want to at least finish in the top three. If I don't I will be disappointed."

Rage: What will you doing between now and the championship kick off? Do you use a pro trainer at all?

DD: "Yes I train with the RMJ Academy and will hopefully be getting as much fitness and bike time in over the winter months as possible. 2014 is a big year for me and I aim to be in the best possible shape for it."

Rage: Name five favourite tracks on the National circuit and your least favourite if you have one?

DD: "Five favourites would be Hawkstone Park, Whitby, FatCat, Culham and Mildenhall. My least favourite is Canada Heights."

Rage: If you had the power to change one rule in MX right now – what would you do?

DD: "Right now I would want to change back the European 85cc age rule to how it was in 2012 then I would be able to do one more year."

Rage: Looking back over the past season which was the top moment at National level and what was the worst or most disappointing memory?

DD: "My favourite race was at the British Masters at the FatCat round. It was my first national win and it's a special memory. My most disappointing time was at Weston as my bike failed on the opening lap. I was gutted – I really wanted it there!"

Rage: In 2014 with the varied choice of National championships to enter do you welcome all of this or do you think it's all now too confusing?

DD: "Yeah there are plenty of championships to choose from that's for sure – maybe too many. I think we should have just one premier series like the Dutch have the ONK."

Rage: Thanks for all of that Dexter. Any final shouts?

DD: "Yeah massive thanks to RSC Europe, Martin at Sandiford Offroad, Dylan at Putoline, EHR, mum and dad and RMJ Academy."

GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

THEN CONTACT OUR YOUTH EDITOR MIKE GURNEY AT MIKEGURNEY55@YAHOO.CO.UK





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COUNTDOWN!

By the time this issue of DBR hits the shelves we'll be just 30 days away from the start of the 2014 AMA Supercross series and it's set to be an absolute corker so tune in next month when we'll have all the action from the first round at Angels Stadium in Anaheim, California...



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